

# NEW MASSES

DEC. 1932

15¢



# NEW MASSES

DEC. 1932

15¢



DEBATE:

# **CAPITALISM vs. COMMUNISM**

**HAMILTON FISH, Jr. vs. SCOTT NEARING**



**HAMILTON FISH, JR.**  
*Congressman, Ranking Republican  
Member—Committee Foreign  
Affairs.*

**Roger Baldwin**  
AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION  
Chairman

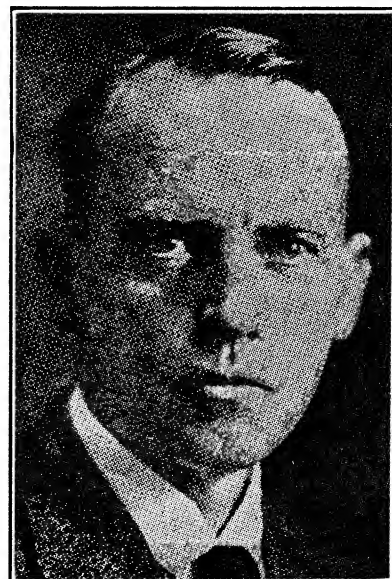
•  
**Friday, Dec. 16**

8:15 P. M. SHARP

•  
**MECCA Auditorium**

55th St. between 6th and 7th Avenues

New York City



**SCOTT NEARING**  
*Economist, Lecturer, Author of  
"Must We Starve?" "Dollar  
Diplomacy," etc.*

## **MAXIM GORKY FESTIVAL**

**Friday, Dec. 23rd at 8.30 p. m.**

CENTRAL OPERA HOUSE  
67th Street and Third Avenue

### PROGRAM:

GROUP THEATRE MEMBERS in Dramatic Sketch  
COMPINSKY TRIO IN CHAMBER MUSIC  
MOVIES OF MAXIM GORKY

### Speakers:

MICHAEL GOLD — JOHN DOS PASSOS  
JOSEPH FREEMAN — MOISSAYE J. OLGIN  
LOUISE THOMPSON, just returned from a tour of  
Soviet Union where she was in group making  
film of Negro life.

## **MAXIM GORKY AWARD**

to be given to authors of three most outstanding American  
revolutionary or proletarian novels

*Auspices: REVOLUTIONARY WRITERS FEDERATION*

Tickets on sale at *Revolutionary Writers Federation*,  
114 West 21 St. Chelsea 3-9306

Also at Workers Bookshop, 50 East 13th Street

Box or reserved orchestra seat \$1.00; orchestra 60c.

# **CAPITALISM vs. COMMUNISM**

**HAMILTON FISH, Jr. vs. SCOTT NEARING**



**HAMILTON FISH, JR.**  
*Congressman, Ranking Republican  
Member—Committee Foreign  
Affairs.*

**Roger Baldwin**  
AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION  
Chairman

•  
**Friday, Dec. 16**

8:15 P. M. SHARP

•  
**MECCA Auditorium**

55th St. between 6th and 7th Avenues

New York City



**SCOTT NEARING**  
*Economist, Lecturer, Author of  
"Must We Starve?" "Dollar  
Diplomacy," etc.*



# NEW MASSES

1910—Seventh Year of the New Masses -- 1926 -- Twenty Second Year of the Masses—1932

VOLUME 8

DECEMBER, 1932

NUMBER 5

**Editorial Board:** ROBERT EVANS, WHITTAKER CHAMBERS, HUGO GELLERT, MICHAEL GOLD, LOUIS LOZOWICK, MOISSAYE J. OLGIN

**CONTRIBUTORS:**—Phil Bard, Emjo Basshe, Jacob Burck, Whittaker Chambers, Robert Cruden, Jack Conroy, Adolph Dehn, Robert Dunn, John Dos Passos, Kenneth Fearing, Ed Falkowski, Hugo Gellert, Eugene Gordon, Horace Gregory, William Gropper, Charles Yale Harrison, William Hernandez, Langston Hughes, Joseph Kalar, I. Klein, Melvin P. Levy, Louis Lozowick, H. H. Lewis, Norman Macleod, A. B. Magill, Scott Nearing, Myra Page, Harry Allan Potamkin, Paul Peters, Walter Quirt, Louis Ribak, Anna Rochester, E. Merrill Root, James Rorty, Martin Russak, Esther Shemitz, William Siegel, Upton Sinclair, Agnes Smedley, Otto Soglow, Herman Spector, Bennett Stevens, Joseph Vogel, Mary H. Vorse, Keene Wallis, Jim Waters, Art Young.

Published monthly by NEW MASSES, inc., Office of publication, 799 Broadway, New York City. Copyright 1932, by NEW MASSES, Inc., Reg. U. S. Patent Office. Drawings and text may not be reprinted without permission. Entered as second class matter, June 24, 1926, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879.

Subscribers are notified that no change of address can be effected in less than a month. The NEW MASSES is a co-operative venture. It does not pay for contributions.

Subscription \$1.50 a year in U. S. and Colonies and Mexico. Foreign, \$2.00. Single Copies, 15 Cents; 20c abroad.

## CORLISS LAMONT

# THE HOLY WAR AGAINST COMMUNISM

The most significant recent development in the anti-Soviet front in religious circles has been the report, after a period of two years' study in the Far East, of the Appraisal Committee of the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, sponsored by seven leading Protestant denominations. The Commission recommends that Protestant Christian missionaries should cease their traditional procedure of attacking Mohammedanism, Buddhism, and Shintoism and should unite with these other religions against the common enemy, non-religion, particularly as represented by Communism. It is enlightening to note that John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and other wealthy laymen financed the cost of the inquiry; and that the Chairman of the Commission, Professor William E. Hocking of Harvard University, is an outstanding exponent in this country of that same outworn philosophy of Idealism which Hegel utilized to justify the *status quo*.

Various instalments of the report have been released to the press since early in October and the whole of it has just been published in book form by Harper's under the title of "Re-Thinking Missions." So far as Soviet Russia and Communism are concerned, the key to the report is in the following statement from one of the first instalments printed: "What becomes of the issues between the merits of one sacred text and another when the sacredness of all texts is being denied? Why compare Mohammed and Buddha, when all the utterances of religious intuition are threatened with discard in the light of practical reason? It is no longer, Which prophet? or Which book? It is whether any prophet, book, revelation, rite, church, is to be trusted. The chief foe of these oracles is not Christianity, but the philosophies of Marx, Lenin, Russell. The case that must now be stated is the case for any religion at all. Thus it is that Christianity finds itself in point of fact aligned in this world-wide issue with the non-Christian faiths of Asia. It is an alignment which solves no problems of religious difference, but simply shows how necessary it has become for every religion to be aware of and to stand upon the common ground of all religion."

Thus this report constitutes an appeal to all religious organizations of all faiths throughout the world to join in a crusade against the philosophies and followers of Marx and Lenin. The summons to Christians obviously includes, not just Protestants, but the whole of "Christianity." The recommendations quoted clearly are applicable to Catholic as well as Protestant missions. And if Protestants can combine in a common cause with Mohammedans and other errant pagans, they surely will be able to do so with the Christian Church of Rome. Indeed, this part of the report reads like nothing so much as the call of Pope Pius XI to a holy war in his encyclical of May, 1932: "It is necessary . . . that we unite all our forces in one solid, compact line against the battalions of evil, enemies of God no less than of the human race . . . For God or against God, this once more is the alternative that shall decide the destinies of all mankind . . . In the name of the Lord, therefore, we conjure individuals and nations . . . to unite together even at the cost of heavy sacrifices to save themselves

and mankind. In such a union of minds and forces they naturally ought to be first who are proud of the Christian name . . . But let all those also loyally and heartily concur who still believe in God and adore Him, in order to ward off from mankind the great danger that threatens all alike."

The Laymen's report, calling attention to the painful exposures of Christianity which Communism has been making in China, also brings to mind the agitated utterances of worried Y.M.C.A. secretaries, returning from the East, to the effect that in China it is now a race between Christianity and Communism. The report recalls, too, what was very probably one of its chief guiding precedents, namely, the 1931 report of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions. This stated that, "The situation in Russia and the effect of the ruthless anti-religious program of the Soviet Government again forms the outstanding feature of world news in the field of religion. Will Christianity definitely recede before atheism in the largest country on the European Continent? Will one-sixth of the civilized inhabitants of the globe go permanently pagan? Will the anti-religious impetus, going east as well as west, engulf the first fruits of the harvest of Christianity in China, Korea, and Japan?"

Proceeding further with the Laymen's report we find one section devoted to the social and industrial problems of the Far East. This reveals beyond any doubt that the Commission stands fundamentally on the side of the capitalist powers-that-be. "A world organization of missions," it says, "with its sympathies and contacts extending to many lands should not in the view of this Commission be the advocate of any particular economic order. Missions should consider it their duty and privilege to be informed about all economic orders." Then, with almost incredible naivety, the Commission continues: "*The mission owes to the political order under which it operates its loyal obedience, and its fixed preference for orderly as distinct from violent progress*" (italics mine—C. L.). At the same time the Commission pats on the back the sham Ramsay MacDonald kind of Socialism, stating condescendingly that, "Socialism should be better understood . . . as in many of its motives it is essentially Christian. It should be appreciated as an effort to devise a plan to cure some of the most glaring evils of the modern industrial order." The Commission proceeds to tell its readers that, "Careful discrimination should be made between different types of Communism, from the Russian type with its violence and anti-religious antagonism on the one hand to those milder forms which are little more than a pooling of economic resources for protection and support on the other."

As regards the missions themselves, "If they believe in capitalism as on the whole the best social order for the production of wealth and the development of individual initiative, as doubtless most of them do, they should be particularly fearless in attacking the evils of capitalism and in endeavoring to correct them." Here is direct acknowledgment that the missions today are firm supporters of capitalism and that the Commission itself is in favor at most of a high-sounding but futile reformism. We need not make

further citations to expose the basic allegiances of this capitalist-financed and capitalist-minded Commission.

To return to the specifically religious issue, the mention of Bertrand Russell along with Marx and Lenin, while serving to turn attention away from the fact that the "foe" with which the framers of the report are primarily concerned is Soviet Russia and Communism, has a significance which they presumably did not have in mind. This is that many of the best minds in the capitalist world agree to a large extent with the Communists on the question of religion. For example, besides Russell, the three most noted contemporary American philosophers — John Dewey, Morris Cohen, and George Santayana—are all atheists, though they are not very keen to say so. As Professor Cohen puts it, "I do not like to call myself an atheist, because those who apply that term to themselves seem singularly blind to the limitations of our knowledge and to the infinite possibilities beyond us." And there are many others like him who are atheists, but who on one ground or another excuse themselves from using a word still somewhat frowned upon in polite society. Even many of the so-called Humanists, among them such a tamed liberal as Walter Lippman, agree with the Marxists that neither God nor immortality exists and that men should concentrate their attention on the goods of this life. But the decisive distinction between bourgeois atheists and Marxists is that Marxists know that capitalism and religion are inextricably bound together.

The Soviets have simply had the intelligence, the courage and the frankness to take an open, thorough-going stand on a matter concerning which hypocrisy and evasiveness prevail and has pre-

vailed in capitalist countries. This is one of the things that so scandalizes the Pope. In the encyclical quoted previously he says: "There were never lacking impious men nor men who denied God; but they were relatively few, isolated, and individual, and they did not care or did not think it opportune to reveal too openly their impious minds . . . The impious, the atheist, lost in the crowd, denies God, his creator, but in the secret of his heart." His Holiness means of course that formerly the social consequences of avowed atheism were so heavy that few atheists "thought it opportune to reveal too openly their impious minds." We can well understand why the Pope laments the good old days.

Now that a leading group of Protestants have issued their call for an international united front in what their co-worker Pius XI terms "this battle for the defense of religion," it becomes more essential than ever before tirelessly to oppose and expose this campaign which has for its chief hope the downfall of the Soviet Union. For this purpose workers and intellectuals must themselves form a united front—a *counter* united front. And its aim will be to make clear to everyone that the constant tirades on religious grounds against the Soviet and Communism by Popes, preachers, and professors are only too well calculated to arouse the passions of war; that when, for instance, Father Cox of Fordham University talks of "a new crusade" and "a death struggle" against Russia he has something more in mind than mere preaching and propaganda; and finally that these tirades are fundamentally the ugly masks of the deeper and ever more ugly economic forces of capitalism and imperialism.



Jacob Burck



Jacob Burck





Jacob Burek



# PEACE ON EARTH, GOOD WILL TO MEN

1.

The Journal des Débats already warns M. Herriot against breaking with the Holy See, because of the large number of French Catholic institutions abroad. French influence in Asia Minor and North Africa is largely maintained through these institutions.

—(*New York World*, June 4, 1924)

2.

Students at City College were warned against rebellions on the college campus by the Rev. Dr. Jacob Katz, rabbi of Montefiore Synagogue, and Jewish chaplain at Sing Sing, in his sermon yesterday morning. He further said:

"At times we were amused and oft we stood aghast at the puerile rebellion that our well-meaning youth created on the campus of the City College. And how painful is the thought that it is our youth who were the rebels. I contend that the Jew is not in a position nor is he justified in staging revolutions thoughtlessly merely because they are an exhaust for spiritual and surplus energy. Judaism is a law consisting of rules of conduct promulgated by the sages who sought their inspiration in prophetic writings. The Judaism they gave us does not consist only of the ideals of righteousness, but of rules of reasonableness to be applied to existing society.

"Let us, under the guidance of the synagogue, continue the education of our children in their adolescent stage and then shall the college, whose students in the majority are Jewish, not be impeded in its growth because they will not then embarrass President Robinson. He will be in a stronger position to convince the City Fathers of the vital necessity of helping the college grow along with the material development of our city."

—(*New York Times*, June 25, 1928)

3.

At a meeting of strikers this afternoon, the Rev. Mariano Milane, pastor of the Holy Rosary Church, interrupted a call for pickets.

The little pastor stormed into the Essex street headquarters of the radicals, cut into the speech of a union leader, and called on his own countrymen, on the men of his own parish to follow him, and in spite of efforts to detain them, many followed him out of the hall.

—(*Boston Herald*, February 23, 1931)

4.

Baltimore, Nov. 12 (U.P.)—Had Jesus Christ lived in 1917 He would have been the first to volunteer in the American Army, the Rev. Dr. T. Andrew Caraker said at an American Legion banquet.

Not only would Christ have enlisted, said Dr. Caraker, pastor of the Universalist Church of Our Father, but He would have been the first to wear a gas mask, shoulder a rifle, and enter the trenches.

—(*N. Y. Daily News*, Nov. 13, 1931)

5.

Madrid, April 2.—King Alfonso today got down on his knees in the royal palace to wash the feet of twelve poor men. Queen Victoria, in a gold and white court dress, with a white lace mantilla and elaborate jewels, washed the feet of twelve poor women, and the monarchs afterward served food to the group with their own hands.

Nobles, high church dignitaries, including the Papal Nuncio, resplendent Generals and members of the royal family in magnificent court regalia watched their Catholic Majesties observe the age-old custom of Maundy Thursday in thus administering to the poor in rags and tatters.

Political differences were forgotten and politics shoved into the background as republicans and monarchists marched together in penitential processions, in some towns and villages dragging chains hundreds of pounds in weight behind them.

—(*N. Y. Times*, April 13, 1931)

6.

"The right to possess private property is derived from nature, not from man, and the State has by no means the right to abolish it but only to control its use and bring it into harmony with the interests of the public good.

"Since the days of Leo XIII, socialism, too, the great enemy with which His battles were waged, has undergone profound changes....

"It would seem as if Socialism were afraid of its own principles and of the conclusion drawn therefrom by the Communists, and in consequence were drifting toward the truth which Christian tradition has always held in respect, for it cannot be denied that its programs often strikingly approach the just demands of Christian social reformers."

—(*Pope Pius XI, Encyclical on Labor*, 1931)

7.

Rome, July 16.—The Rev. James Cox of Pittsburgh launched his campaign for the Presidency of the United States here today as the candidate for the "Jobless" party. He had an audience with Pope Pius XI yesterday and this afternoon flew to Munich. His campaign slogan will be "either my party or communism."

—(*Rev. Cox later withdrew in favor of Roosevelt*)

8. —

Berlin, May 4.—Although church and State are rigorously kept separate in Germany, the government took forcible measures today to protect religion from Bolshevik atheist propaganda.

"The dissolution of these organizations," a spokesman said, "is to stamp out atheist propaganda that aims at a Bolshevik revolution by undermining Christian civilization and morals."

—(*New York Times*, May 5, 1932)

9.

Strikebreakers were enrolled yesterday at two buildings used as branches of the Salvation Army to replace longshoremen who left the piers of three ship lines on Friday when a 10 percent wage reduction was enforced.

Agents of two detective agencies that have provided workers for the ship lines were permitted to address men at the Salvation Army buildings at Corlears Hook and West Forty-eighth Street. The adjutants in charge of the buildings introduced the agents and provided desk space where the men were enrolled. Later, when protests were made, Commissioner John McMillan assured that a mistake had been made and the practice would cease.

—(*New York Times*, April 19, 1932)

10.

Vatican City, June 2.—Today's Osservatore Romano, unofficial organ of the Vatican, reminded its readers that the Papal encyclical adjured abstention from entertainments and amusements so that the money thus saved might be given to the poor.

(*New York Times*, June 2, 1932)

11.

Beginning at Sixty-fifth Street and proceeding more than a mile to the Church of the Heavenly Rest, more than 2,000 marchers, representing scores of military, civic and patriotic organizations, passed in full regalia before cheering throngs of spectators and a group of men high in military or naval rank serving as formal reviewers.

The celebration, marking the Sunday before Armistice Day, closed with a special service of the flag at the church, whose rector, the Rev. Dr. Henry Darlington, together with Brigadier General Oliver B. Bridgman, first conceived the program for the yearly memorial in 1922. Dr. Darlington welcomed the gathering and Major Gen. Dennis E. Nolan, commandant of the Second Corps Area, spoke.

—(*New York Times*, November 11, 1932)

12.

PEIPING, Feb. 9, (U.P.)—Eleven American Catholic missionaries in southern Kiangsi Province were begging for help the United States Legation reported today. The missionaries were at Kanchow which is surrounded by Chinese Communist armies. The Legation urged the Kiangsi provincial authorities to send troops to rescue the Americans.

PAUL SALTER

# THE PHILOSOPHY OF SPINOZA

On November 24th, the tercentenary of Spinoza was celebrated throughout the world. The spiritual descendants of those whom he most bitterly attacked now praise his name. Catholic priests and bishops, Protestant theologians, and Jewish Rabbis all glorify his character, signal out his "religious" fervor, and gloss over and excuse his heresies. Others make an organized cult of this inspired atheist, and become prayerful at the mention of his name.

The independent spirit of Spinoza is praised by men like the infamous President of City College, Dr. Robinson, who imposes on his students restrictions of speech and opinion, which Spinoza had thoroughly denounced.

The noisiest "followers" of Spinoza today are these cultists who make up the *Spinoza Center*, and they are the farthest removed from his thought and spirit. A thinker who took men as products of nature, and constructed his theory of the state on his analysis of men, is now honored by an appeal for "unselfishness." Men are corrupt, they say, not because of the society in which they live but because they are selfish and uninterested in improving themselves ethically. They celebrate Spinoza's tercentenary by calling for a new revolution: "Not one with a lot of revolt and noise, nor with boisterous acclaim and mass movements, but a White Revolution."\* What we need, they say, is not new systems of society but new men. They make the mistake of reading the Fifth Part of the *Ethics* before the Fourth, of considering "Human Freedom" without "Human Bondage." They have forgotten that Spinoza never speaks of selfishness or unselfishness. He simply points out that men seek their own interests and therefore the affairs of society must be so ordered that the individual in working for his own interest is at the same time serving the interests of the group. Throughout his *Political Treatise* he insists that if we are to have a well governed state we must impose such regulations on the leaders that they can serve themselves only by serving the common good.

Spinoza was a radical in action and thought. He was a friend and supporter of Jan de Witt, the liberal Grand Pensionary of Holland who was brutally murdered by the reactionary Orange party. We know that on hearing of the murder Spinoza wrote a placard denouncing its perpetrators and was only prevented from posting it near the scene of the crime by his landlord who locked him in the house. Another friend, his early teacher Van den Enden, was beheaded in front of the Bastille after conspiring to raise a rebellion in Normandy. In 1665 Spinoza turned aside from his more speculative *Ethics* to support, as a "good republican," the fight for the separation of church and state. His *Theological-Political Treatise* was the result. The clergy and supporters of William of Orange denounced this as a wicked instrument "forged in hell by a renegade Jew and the devil." After the death of the de Witts, William strictly prohibited the treatise and measures were contemplated against the known author of the anonymous work. We know further how Spinoza distrusted Leibniz. When Leibniz was in Paris a friend of Spinoza asked his permission to show Leibniz a manuscript copy of the *Ethics*. Spinoza refused, asking what Leibniz was doing in Paris. He had reason to suspect that Leibniz was on a mission for the reunion of Protestants and Catholics which he knew would lead to a joint effort to repress all liberal tendencies and freedom of thought and speech. These are a few of Spinoza's practical interests and aims.

Today it is popular to talk of Spinoza's god. The church appeals to the less orthodox by ignoring his heresies and emphasizing the religious aspect of his thought. It is wise in doing this, but we have more respect for the churchmen of his day who knew he was their deadly enemy and gave him no quarter. "Is it not the most pernicious atheism that ever was seen in the world?" they asked. We are told, "his works were scarce published but God raised to his Glory, and for the defence of the Christian Religion, several Champions who confuted them with all the Success they could hope for." Spinoza's use of the term God has occasioned considerable difficulty. He himself declared that "while we are speaking

philosophically we must not use modes of expression of Theology." Undoubtedly his use of God represented an attempt to retain the emotional values of religion in the new world of science to which he was devoted. But in terms of the thought of his day there was no more effective way of destroying the traditional religious idea of God that by attributing to nature attributes that formerly had been ascribed to the deity alone.

Why, some ask, has his attack on religion succeeded so little in demolishing it? For the same reason that the eighteenth century atheists of France failed of their purpose. It attacked only the product, not the roots; it demolished theology, but left the source untouched. Not until the nineteenth century, with its new social and historical concepts, was it possible to understand that religion was an historical social product which would exist so long as the conditions existed which produced and required it. Then only was an instrument forged which threatens all religion because it seeks the destruction of that form of society on which religion rests. That it has been successful is evidenced by a recent appeal of churchmen for the united struggle of all the religious forces of the world against their common enemy—the philosophy of Marx and Lenin. It was sufficient for Spinoza, in his time, to criticize the religious conception of God, to attack the authority of the scriptures, and to castigate religion's priests and prophets.

His "Theological-Political Treatise," is the first critical examination of the inconsistencies of the Old Testament, and the true ancestor of the modern scientific analysis of sacred books, it is also a powerful defense of the liberty of speech and opinion against the restrictions of private and religious authority. He was one of the first to see that religion derives its power authority from the state and not from God, and that its rites and ceremonies are products of a particular social, political and economic form and cannot have any validity under new conditions.

He saw in religion remnants of ancient slavery and pointed out the self-interest of an established church to maintain its power and its revenues. In his *Theological-Political Treatise* he quotes with approval the words of a classic historian, Quintus Curtius, that there is no more effective means of governing the masses than superstition. Hence he derived the power of the religion from the state, rather than from God: "The great secret of the monarchical regime and its major interest is to deceive men and to color with the name of religion the fear which is to dominate them, in order that they should fight for their (masters) as if it were a matter of their own salvation, and believe it not shameful, but even honorable to the highest degree to shed their blood and their lives for the vanity of a single man."

It was Spinoza's great achievement to see nature as a unified whole. From that it follows that man is in nature and is determined by natural laws. His emotions arise out of particular conditions in accordance with determinate rules and principles. To understand them, therefore, is to understand the processes through which they have come to be, in terms of general principles. The possession of this kind of knowledge permits prediction and control. Although Spinoza applies this technique only to the emotions, it can with equal right be extended to political and economic forms. In Marxism there is precisely this kind of knowledge. And whereas Spinoza had a Utopian conception of the ideal society as that which gives the most freedom, Marx provided the scientific means for its attainment.

Beginning with the next issue there will be a page (at least) devoted to Workers' Art. Workers' Clubs, John Reed Clubs, and similar organizations are asked to address reports of their activity to the Workers' Art Editor. The reports should not detail activities, but should rather dwell on the *experience* of the Club, presenting it in such a fashion that it will be of value to other clubs. The Workers' Art Editor also requests that controversial matters, requests for information, contacts, etc. be sent to him. The aim of the Workers' Art Section will be the laying of a base for cooperative and concerted work in the proletarian cultural field.

Address: WORKERS' ART EDITOR, *New Masses*, 799 Broadway, New York City.

\* (G. Gorkov, *SPINOZA QUARTERLY*, Aug. 1932, p. 49).

**Harold Meadows****America's Way Out**

*Money for Tomorrow\** is another proposed road to freedom for the capitalist class. It takes its place with the proposals of the United States Chamber of Commerce for economic stabilization by "suggestions," the National Civic Federation's idea of a "Business Congress," Gerard Swope's "trade associations" or Capitalist Soviets, and Stuart Chase's "Peace Industries Board." Most of these plans would preserve what the capitalists have without sacrificing what they must. In this lies the inspiration and the bankruptcy of Woodward's plan. Our present plight provides the economic spring-board for a new type of scholasticism which would resolve all our ills in terms of "the given." What these economic scholastics fail to appreciate, however, is that their bankruptcy lies in the acceptance of "the given."

It was Woodward's evident intention in writing *Money For Tomorrow* to bolster up a tottering Capitalism which "has been slowly destroying itself for twenty-five or thirty years, and is now about the middle of its drama of dissolution." Its "suicide . . . may be deferred for many years if its leaders have enough foresight to set up balancing compensations which will minimize its tendency to self-destruction." Woodward suggests the "balancing compensations," for, at this moment, "whatever we may think of capitalism, our chief concern is to help it recover from its attack of paralytic melancholia." The "balancing compensations" involve first, an immediate raising of the entire price level. This means some sort of inflation. Through an industrial loan raised by publicly floated bond issues, the government should lend without security a monthly sum to every unemployed person without resources of his own or family support. The borrower must contract to return the sums advanced on the procuring of employment. This "dole" would be a temporary expedient, ending with the resumption of full-time employment. This would soon follow, due to the increased purchases of consumers' goods and the revival of related industries. Second, the establishment by Congress, periodically, of the minimum prices at which domestic wheat and cotton can be bought, the prices so fixed as to represent the world price prevailing at the time plus the flexible tariff then in effect on wheat and cotton. This is to aid the farmer.

There is no doubt that the stabilization of prices at current levels will be disastrous to the debtor class in which there are many farmers, workers and petty bourgeois; that millions will lose, if they have not already lost, their equities in homes and farms; that the little that remains to worker and farmer, if they still have anything, will fall to the banking vultures whose holdings have increased tremendously in the past few years. Nor is there any doubt that the policy of the capitalist political parties with the cry of retrenchment, sound currency, economy and balanced budget is to give further aid to the already sated creditor class by maintaining the integrity of fixed obligations and denying to the underdog the slight relief that controlled-inflation might give. But the raising of the price level through a system of industrial loans or the artificial establishment of a price on wheat and cotton, supposing both were possible, would be as far as curing the present system is concerned as beneficial as putting cold cream on a cancer. The failure of the capitalist parties to adopt such a mild program merely indicates how brazen and callous they are to all cries but that of the numerically small but powerful banking and creditor group.

Woodward points quite clearly to the economic roots of our current chaos. He recognizes in the anarchy of production under capitalism and the grave disproportion in the distribution of the social income the seeds of the crisis. The figures of the United States Census Bureau are illuminating:

*Wages in Relation to Value of Product (Manufacturing Industry)*

Year	Product per Worker	Average Wage	Per Cent.
1879	\$1965	\$ 346.00	17.6
1899	2420	426.10	17.6
1919	6902	1162.50	16.8
1927	7459	1299.40	17.4

It is obvious that the wage-earner's share in the product has

not increased at all in the last fifty years although his productivity has increased immensely. And the last figures are for 1927, the year of so-called prosperity. What would the figures be today! But this is not all. When we say that the average wage of a worker has increased from \$346 in 1879 to \$1299 in 1927 we are merely referring to his *money wage*, not the *real wage* or the amount of goods he can buy for the money wage. The following schedule is illuminating:

Year	Real Value of Wages	
	Money wages	Purchasing Power
1899	\$ 426.10	\$629.30
1919	1162.50	625.00
1927	1299.40	836.16

The index used in the above calculations is the index of retail food prices of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics for 1913, a year just halfway between 1899 and 1927. It conclusively points to the fact that the average *real wage* between 1899 and 1927 is the difference between \$629.30 and \$836.16, or \$206.86, a percentage rise of 32.8 per cent. At the same time, however, the value of the average worker's output rose from \$2420 to \$7459—an increase of 209 per cent. The reader can estimate for himself how many miles the worker's productive capacity is ahead of his purchasing power. And it must not be forgotten that these figures refer to employed workers, not unemployed, and that the last figures refer to the period of so-called prosperity, not this year of adversity.

The farmer is in an even worse plight. He no longer gets any part of the social income. In 1927 when the value of farm products amounted to over \$12 million, his average income amounted to \$659 from which taxes and food used on farm had yet to be deducted. According to Department of Agriculture estimates for 1931, the gross value of all agricultural products was \$4 million, or only one-third of the value for the year 1927. The total value of farm products for 1931 did not nearly cover the fixed charges, such as rent, interest on mortgage, loans, taxes etc., which the farmer was compelled to meet. Where is the social income of this fourth of the American people? The plain truth is that it doesn't exist—for him. The speculators, the mortgages (bankers), the railroads (freight charges), and the manufacturers have salted it away for him—as they have for the city worker.

Yet in the face of these catastrophic facts Woodward maintains that "The makings of a social revolution do not exist in America . . . There is not the slightest danger of our American civilization being overthrown by Socialists or Communists. A social mechanism of any kind, as long as it works even fairly well, is unbeatable, and cannot be harmed by dissenters." A socialist society is only possible if "Capitalism breaks down completely; until it finally and definitely commits suicide." Why? Because "Capitalism . . . is a tissue of dreams" whereas "the Socialist program is to abolish the visionary and unreal." Did you ever hear such bourgeois nonsense? Capitalism will never be overthrown because it is the only type of society that gives the worker the "hope of someday becoming a capitalist. "These dreams are often inspiring; the appeal to the romantic quality of life." Therefore, says Woodward, the main task should not be to fight Capitalism, but to fight for it—for a bigger and better Capitalism. We should not hasten the fall of capitalist competition with all its ills. "The proper remedy is to permit monopolies, or trusts, to develop and then regulate them in the public interest." Then, through public regulation, we can limit, not abolish, profits and transform an acquisitive into a functional society. This is his cure for future recurrences of economic crises.

What is going to happen to the millions of workers displaced from industry, the millions of farmers chased off the land, the increased disproportion in the distribution of social income, is of no concern to Woodward. Nor would it make any difference if he were concerned. For the simple fact is that he was looking for the capitalist way out. But the facts to which he points have another meaning to workers and farmers. For them these facts point to the existence of a predatory upper class without parallel in history, a class that lives from the feast provided it by productive and exploited masses, a class whose greed will never be sated till it has been resigned to the limbo of forgotten men. It is the historic task of the proletariat to accomplish this end.

\**Money for Tomorrow*, by W. E. Woodward. Liveright. \$2.50.

A. GURSTEIN

# Artist and Class

A writer's work, in its concreteness and immediacy, must be considered the particular work of a particular artist. It is individual. However, like all sciences, literary critical science tries to find and define the general behind the particular. The individual artistic consciousness of the author manifests itself in every given expression; but this individual consciousness is only a particular expression of the general, namely, the social consciousness. Social consciousness is not homogeneous: it varies with each class in the given society. It is there the task of the literary investigator to determine the class nature of the given creation and its place in the general process of literature through comparing and contrasting the given work with the work of other writers and through the study of the literary process as a whole.

As one of the forms of social consciousness, artistic creation is ideology. Social consciousness is directed toward the perception of the world, of the entire environmental (social) reality. Within the context of the artistic creation it is the artist who perceives, and that which is perceived by him constitutes in itself reality; the artist is the subject of perception, reality its object. What then is the relationship between the subject and the object of perception?

When idealism approached the solution of this problem, it completely divorced the subject from the object, thus separating thought from being. The perceiver, according to the idealists, stands apart from the object perceived as if he were an absolute and independent entity. Marxism, on the other hand, holds that the perceiver (the subject) is himself part and parcel of reality.

"The subject himself," wrote Plekhanov, "comprises one of the component parts of the objective world."

Thinking is possible to the perceiver only because he is an organized body within the plan of nature; he thinks as he does because he is a product of a definite social environment. The perceiver is not only a subject standing in antithetical relation to the objects of perception (reality); he is at the same time an object determined by reality, or, to be more exact, a subject-object. Moreover, from the Marxian viewpoint perception is not a passive isolated contemplation of reality—it is achieved by means of the practical social activity of the perceiver. Man, acting upon the world, at the same time modifies his own nature. The tools that man uses as a social producer are according to Marx an organ "that he annexes to his own bodily organs, adding stature to himself in spite of the Bible". The consciousness of the social man, his mode of conception, changes therefore with the changes in the mode of production.

This is our conception of the term "subject-object". In every act of social consciousness, no matter what form it may assume (artistic or otherwise) a certain unity exists between the subject and object of perception; not equality, not identity, but a *unity* linking the subject and object into a definite homogeneity. As a perceiving subject man is a *class* subject, namely, part and product of a definite class, of a definite social existence. The apprehended reality, conditioned by the viewpoint and social practice of the given class, consequently forms the content of social consciousness. Every class apprehends reality in its own way.

Thus far we have spoken of social consciousness in general. However, what we have said holds true for all forms of social consciousness, for all ideological expressions, including the artistic. In approaching a given creation we do not naively imagine that the artist's depiction is an exact mirror of reality. Such is the viewpoint of naive realism which accepts everything in sight as the truth. When Tolstoy depicts a peasant, that peasant is completely different from one depicted by a peasant artist. Every class apprehends in its artistic creation the environmental reality in a manner dictated and prompted by its class nature; thus it creates a separate artistic reality of its own, always and ever patterned after its own likeness. Hence it is the primary task of the investigator to determine which class created a given literary work and at what stage of its development this creation took place. How are we to understand this?

As we have seen, every class erects its own definite boundaries, its own definite frame for that reality which the class-subject

(the artist) is capable of perceiving and presenting through the medium of art. Does this mean, however, that no conditions exist which enable a class to gain a broad and full apprehension of the environmental reality? Some investigators who call themselves Marxists maintain that the artist always remains locked within a "magic circle" of images from which he has no way of escape and which he cannot evade. Wherever he may turn and at every step, these images (limited by his class horizon) constantly pursue and permeate his creation. It is precisely such ideas that V. P. Pereverzev presents. To him can be attributed the idea of a "magic circle" of images. Pereverzev defends the theory of "image disguise". This theory states that a writer inevitably clothes his heroes in images peculiar to the writer's class. If Dostoevsky, as Pereverzev holds, was a genteel petty bourgeois, then all his heroes are "genteel petty bourgeois". These ideas are developed in Pereverzev's well-known book, *Dostoevsky's Creations*. They are not accidental with Pereverzev; they form an organic link in his general mechanistic conception. The objective social political character of this theory, which until recently enjoyed a wide and popular following, we cannot characterize other than as menshevik-reactionary.

To conceive of the literary process in this manner would mean to conceive class existence as completely separated from the totality of social existence. In reality it is not so. Classes are in constant traffic with one another, either through struggle or through alliance, (as for instance in the alliance of the workers and the poor and middle peasants under the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat). This is why, notwithstanding the boundaries that exist for a class, it nevertheless—under certain definite historical conditions—gains the ability to apprehend the surrounding social reality in a comprehensive fashion. In every epoch each class enjoys, so to speak, a determined degree of knowledge, a measure of apprehending the *total* reality, the *total* being. Depending on the role of the class and its position in the general production process, this measure varies with different classes and different epochs, furthermore, this measure is not given for all time but changes in one or another direction correlative to the change in the position of a given class. It is just as fluid, just as dialectically mobile as the historic process as a whole.

Having recognized that the degrees of consciousness of various classes and various epochs differ, we also recognize that the position of a class in so far as the correct understanding of the objective perception of reality is concerned, differs in various epochs. In other words, we can speak in a very definite sense concerning *objectivity* (the degree of objectivity) of artistic creation at a given stage of class development. And in this connection it is important to differentiate between the real *objectivity* of an artistic creation and *realism* as an artistic trend.

Which classes are able to rise to an objective artistic perception of reality? The answer is: only those classes whom the social reality permits to see with wide open eyes, only those classes who at the given moment are in step with the unfolding reality. In the period of its rise the bourgeoisie was such a class—when, after it had conquered its class enemy, it was charged with the joy and optimism of an assured future. In truth, at that time the bourgeois environment produced artists who were not afraid to face reality, who eagerly examined the surrounding world and endeavored to express artistically the entire richness and fullness of social life.

Plekhanov wrote of Balzac: "... Balzac achieved much in explaining the psychology of the *various* classes in the society of his time." Plekhanov acknowledges, then, that under certain conditions an artist can penetrate into the psychology of *various* classes. This same critic, despite the fact that he considered Pushkin to be the poet of the Russian nobility, also wrote: "Pushkin's poetry was bare of all revery, it was sober, it depicted reality only." This again means that the sobriety peculiar to Pushkin and his class enabled the poet to see and depict "reality only."

One can recall many such artists who were in possession of a broad measure of objectivity in their depiction of reality. The work of these artists displays a colossal perception value. In Plekhanov, however, we also find many inverse examples. He counterposes Ibsen to Shakespeare for instance: "... his (Ibsen's) dramas could never reach the height of Shakespeare's genius." This is because the measure of reality-perception which Ibsen commanded was strictly limited by the social conditions of his class and his epoch. "The deepest tragedy of Ibsen's position," Plekhanov wrote, "consists in this: that this man, whose character



was so integrated and who valued consistency above all else, was doomed to be perpetually entangled in contradictions." Yet, inasmuch as the social life which produced Ibsen did not include, did not as yet evolve from itself, those necessary postulates which could have bestowed upon him the ability to solve the problems which he presented, it could not have been otherwise.

In the present stage of bourgeois society the proletariat is the class which is in possession of the greatest degree of consciousness of reality. In the first chapter we already spoke of the fact that essentially the *subjective* consciousness of the proletariat constitutes in itself our *objective knowledge*. Just as in the realm of philosophy and science the proletariat, wielding as it does the instrument of dialectic materialism, is the class in possession of the greatest degree of consciousness, which allows it to attain a maximum objectivity of knowledge, so in literature, too, the proletariat is producing its own characteristic artistic method, which enables it to gain *maximum objectivity* in artistic creation.

In this way we reach the conclusion that in various epochs various classes achieve a *diverse* degree of objectivity in their artistic creations. The degree of this objectivity is greater or smaller. In every epoch each class exhausts its potentialities in this respect, but these potentialities do not comprise an unpassable line separating the class from the entire world, from other classes. Each class has its *frontiers* but it also has its *perspectives*.

When a Marxist speaks of the determinism of social phenomena, of social necessity, he is not speaking of fate or destiny which he can under no circumstances evade, and against which it is impossible to pit oneself. Such would be the conception of passive, supine fatalists. The Marxist knows that social phenomena have their causes, that they do not come into being accidentally, that in social life causality reigns; but at the same time he also knows that the human will, the human deed plays a gigantic role in historic development.

It is patent, of course, that before we can effect *changes* in social life, certain prerequisite social conditions must exist. Without these prerequisites it would be totally impossible to revolutionize social life. A revolution does not come of itself, however; it has to be made. The existing prerequisites must be realized, must be transmuted into flesh and blood. This is why Marxism-Leninism is so preponderately characterized by constant activity, by constant aspiration to transform, to change and to build. This is the meaning of Marx's well known formula—not only must we interpret the world, we must also change it. Under the present conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union, the proletariat is that powerful class which not only builds its own life, but also draws into the building of socialism huge masses of other toilers, mainly the toiling peasantry, sweeping them forward in the tide of its social offensive, transforming their class essence and changing their social nature. This is what the problem of the cultural revolution is based on, and from this remoulding a new psychology and a new ideology emerge, which means that a new artistic creation comes into being. The policy of the Communist Party with regard to literature which strives to re-educate and "transform" the writers originating in various petty bourgeois groupings close to the proletariat, also stems



from this dialectic conception. Thus the antecedent limits and frontiers of the class expand, and new broad perspectives unfold before it.

Though the Marxist investigator is constantly conscious of class frontiers, he must nonetheless never immure himself within these limitations and thus cut himself off from the social reality. For in this social reality, which represents a continual flow of actual life, ever renewing itself in new forms and phenomena in it, in this social reality, and not in a vacuum, flows the life of the class and its struggles. Together with its frontiers every class also has its perspectives, and the Marxian investigator must always remember the dynamics of class, its progressive channels and the postulates for its further existence latent in its social position. Not all classes are moving toward new life, toward vitality and victory; under certain conditions certain classes are condemned to extinction. Social life is never static. Within it no congealed forms are to be found. Dissecting social life, abstracting himself in the analysis of this or that link in the general process—as if arresting in his analysis the mighty social torrent—the Marxian investigator must never and in no degree forget the endless motion of social life and its developmental perspectives.

JOHN KWAIT

# ARCHITECTURE UNDER CAPITALISM

*This article was offered to Shelter for publication in the November issue and was rejected by its editor, Buckminster Fuller. He not only rejected it—which was to be expected—but dishonestly announced in the November issue (p. 16), in an attack on the John Reed Club and the New Masses, that “Mr. Kwait had been so effectively answered as to be silenced.” He crowns his dishonesty by a truculent Credo, p. 5, in which he offers Shelter to the world as a public forum and invites a “public demonstration of his error.” He has since expressed his intention to publish the following article in a later issue, which may never appear, and has excused the rejection on the ground that there was no room for the article. Yet at the time he received it, he was still accepting (and borrowing and pirating) material for his November issue, which consists of 136 large pages of two and three columns of type, with an immense mass of news clippings and private correspondence.*

My article on architecture in the *New Masses*, May 1932, is the subject of comment by R. Sherman in the last number of *Shelter*, a newly founded architectural journal. If in reply this journal is submitted to a detailed criticism here, it is because it is the organ of the S.S.A. (Structural Study Associates), a group of fifty architects and technicians, who are aggressively concerned with architecture as a social instrument and with housing reform as a substitute for revolution. Mr. Sherman included in his review a condescending refutation of communism, but said nothing of that part of my article which pertained most vitally to the S.S.A., namely the criticism of the faith in an automatic evolution of society through improved housing technique, irrespective of the conflict of class-interests. For how can one suppose that a new device for manufacturing cheaper houses, controlled by the corporations, which are, by their very nature, party to overproduction, competition, wage-slashing, unemployment, speculation, will by itself work any appreciable change in the structure of capitalist society? Yet the S.S.A. admits throughout that adequate shelter is impossible under existing capitalist production. The irresponsible, socially unplanned introduction of a new technique in a major industry may even precipitate new crises in generating further unemployment and in unsettling the realty and financial markets. But I do not believe the S.S.A. has the intention of accelerating the decay of capitalism by monkeying with it in this manner. Nonetheless, its faith in such an automatic purification by technique, in “evolution” and the good-will of capitalism, is basic for its social philosophy.

But from the inconsistent, confused expositions of this philosophy in the various articles by the S.S.A., from the uneven mixture of mystical and technical notions and the ill-digested shreds of socialist doctrines, the S.S.A. emerges, with its humanitarian ends, not as a radical, progressive group, but as an ineffectual, parasitic cheer-leader in the present campaign to boom the building industry. Though avowedly “socialistic,” it is more attached to the interests of finance and industry, since it awaits from the leaders of business the crucial steps in the reconstruction of society; and finally, it represents a reactionary tendency in its attack on Russia and its specific critique of Communism. Such groups as the S.S.A. are the first allies of Fascism.

The journal *Shelter* revolves around Mr. Fuller (Harvard University and U. S. Navy) and his patented “shelter,” the dymaxion,—one of several factory-made houses, now being designed for various competing manufacturers, in the efforts to discover a virgin industry for intensive, large-scale exploitation. Mr. Fuller has gathered about him a group of architects and technicians—the S.S.A.—for anonymous, cooperative investigation of housing, an investigation which, if successful, will culminate in the manufacture of several million dymaxion houses, at a cost of \$800 a house, but at a sales-price of only \$3000, or—to use the efficient terminology of the S.S.A.—at 50 cents a pound. Each house is planned as an independent, self-sufficient unit. It eliminates (at what final social expense, is not stated) those public utilities to which Mr. Fuller mistakenly attributes the causes of high rent, excessive taxation and inflated land-values. And it even promises a decentralization of city-life, since it would be possible to plant

such a house in one day at a distance of 150 miles from the city or any industrial center.

Although Mr. Fuller speaks constantly of the people and the masses, and even the proletariat, we can guess for what class his dymaxion is intended by the mimeograph and the amphibian airplane-automobile which are listed among the furnishings. The airplane will enable the worker to come quickly to his factory from a distance of 150 miles. As for the cost of rural land, this will be negligible, since land-values will disappear when houses can be planted or removed completely in a single day, by Zeppelin. By its special installments and mobility the house will cut off its “feudal-roots,”—it will no longer be land-tied as in the 19th century. “The existing theory of land-economies will suffer a profound change,” and still more radical social changes will follow from the decentralization of cities brought on by Mr. Fuller’s Dymaxion. The writers of the S.S.A. even hint at socialism.

In the eight articles by members of the Structural Study Associates, their social philosophy is nowhere stated in a clear fashion; but it is evidently based on the views of their leader, Mr. Buckminster Fuller, a prominent engineer who has contributed to the present symposium a long and chaotic article on “Universal Architecture” and “Industrial Emancipation Conditions.”

He proceeds from the notion that the housing industry is the primary one to-day and that it has a tremendous future since it must produce 20 billion shelters in the next 70 years, hence 280 million a year. Analysis of present methods leads to the conclusion that private-profit is prejudicial to Universal Architecture, but that change from capitalism to a better system of communal service will come about automatically from the social attitudes resulting from improved technology. Because it is possible to produce all the material goods of life with the barest effort—seven hours per month per worker—the existing wasteful industry will necessarily be replaced by a more scientific system of which the socialist character is intimated but not brought out clearly. Precisely how technology will yield this result is never stated; but it is assumed that a liberal architecture, designed to make people comfortable, is an ideal framework of society and a model to other industries, and must lead to elimination of present corruption and poverty. Legislation is astutely rejected as the means (but) “industry is and will be responsible for the majority of growth performance, to the extent of the development of a popular awareness of the conditions outlined.” And “thereafter by the process of the Americanly preferred accelerated evolution, as opposed to revolution, there will develop an even more universal awareness of the already factual establishment of the abstract credit system.” Capitalism, it seems, will simply wither away. It will disappear silently. The ruling class will awaken one morning and discover that its holdings are valueless, but that its services to humanity will continue on a noble technological level.

This inevitable evolution, latent in technology, is partly described in another article by Mr. Breines, who says of the slums and all buildings under ten storeys in height that “because of the accelerating cessation of productivity of these obsolete structures, the owners had stopped paying taxes, and were, in effect, getting rid of them to the city. In this way, you see, the municipality gradually became the owner of all the land, and, in a subtle evolutionary manner, a socialist municipality had been established.” But despite this happy retrospect from the year 1940, learned by the Man-from-Mars from the workers playing checkers in the Empire State Building which had been converted into an apartment-house in 1932 for the unemployed who were engaged at 10 cents an hour in demolishing slums for their bosses, the real agent of reform is not merely the “subtle evolutionary” process. For Mr. Fuller it is the “contemporary industrial designers” who “have the responsibility of establishing the new society for the yet untainted new life whose simplified unselfconscious environment may thus forever be freed from the dominant abuses of past selfishness.”

We can guess from their latest designs how our industrial designers will meet this responsibility. We know too well the outcome of those post-war trends of industry which academic



EXERCISE AND KEEP CHEERFUL—(Herbert Hoover)

Philip Reisman.

economists assured us were leading straight to a profit-sharing paradise with a six-hour day and a submissive working class.

It is astonishing that Fuller alludes to Marx and the Soviet Union for we would expect that one who has read Marx (he speaks of the "extraordinary vision of this philosopher") and has acquainted himself with Soviet society would be more direct and realistic in his analysis and social programme. But Fuller's is a home-made, private social criticism, with bits of half-assimilated ideas from more systematically constructed doctrines. He is an engineer and a propagandist for efficiency, but he is indifferent to the efficiency of his own writing. His social criticism renounces consistency in its chaotic form and exclusive jargon; it betrays its confused nature in the alliance of the technical and social ideas with fragments of mysticism, theosophy, and other esoteric cosmic positions, including *science* in the persons of Millikan and Pupin speaking through the *New York Times*.

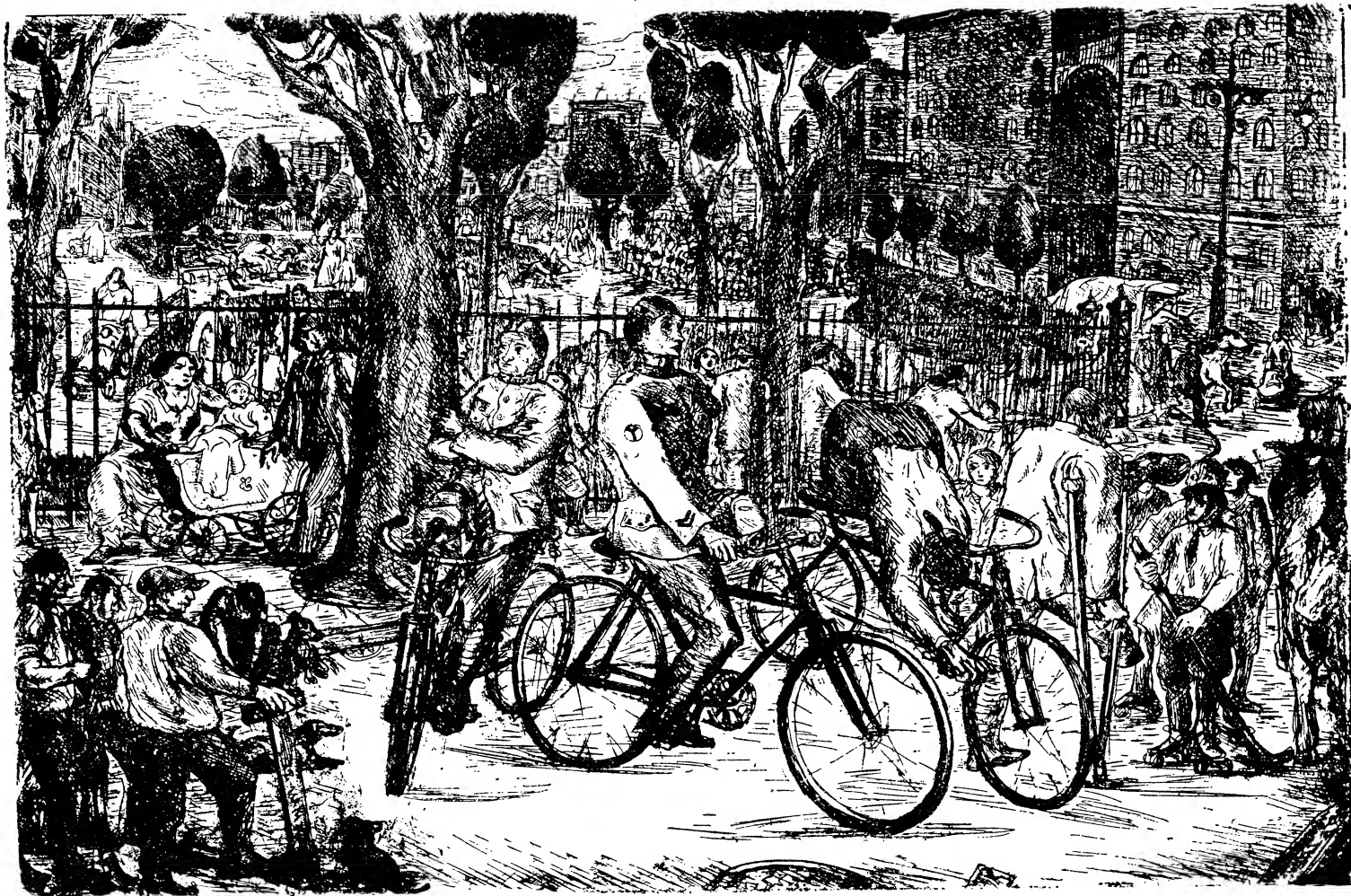
At the head of his article, he writes, "an admixture of interpretive notions of universal conditions provides a dialogic triangulation strange to Manner, but eventually provocative of individual stabilization—by challenge—instead of by Teaching." Of such a concept is the following articulation." Of the "new industrial housing" he says parenthetically,—"technically known as fourth dimensional housing design"; and of his own models for reproducible, cheap houses, he writes: "Euclid's fallacious cubistic geometry having been completely abandoned in contempo-physics, for radionic spheroidal relative growth concept, it is typically paradoxical of a feudal aping society, that man still evolves his dominant physical activity, 'building,' from ignorant tradition." He calls his style "Universal Architecture" (as distinguished from the merely "international" modern style), and says that "intellect is sole guide to Universal Architecture which is humanity's su-

preme survival gesture. Universal Architecture (is) scientific antidote for war." . . . "I have faith in the progressive intellectual revelations of the unity of truth, of the truth of unity and truth of the eternal now." That might have been said by a Hindu adept to a ladies' club for the Promotion of Panpsychic Mysteries. That it should appear in the manifesto of a group of fifty "radical" technicians is a sign of the credulity and helplessness of a professional group in America, which can rally to a leader who announces these rhythmic truths as part of a social program.

The confusion of the S.S.A. extends also to its technical and scientific articles. In reality, this lengthy journal with over fifty large pages of two and three columns of reading matter contains very little of technical interest. There is an article by an S.S.A., describing a project for a theatre, which was never erected. The work of the architect is praised by the editor for its "cleanliness and integrity," its "purity" and even "genius." When we read the architect's description of his own project we discover the earmarks of left-bank aestheticism; at least five cases of type; vague manifestos; pseudophilosophical language; and worse than all these, a bogus mathematical formula, with a pompous integral and incalculable elements,—a "law of construction" in which the color of the stage (F) is divided by the "material, animate and inanimate (Mi/a) . . . O what sense is a call to social efficiency in which the "technician" offers such ridiculous theatrical equations as a guarantee of precision? This is a Rube Goldberg formula, which can make us laugh, but builds no houses. It is like the mathematical *signs* in cubist and abstract pictures; they beg us to credit the artist with a superior insight, somehow related to an esoteric, reputable physics.

But within the very covers which contain this snobbish appeal









A. Refregier

to meaningless symbols is another article by a technician, a Harvard prizeman, Mr. Theodore Larson, who attacks formulas and exact science, who tells us that "physicalism" is dead, determinism abandoned, and a new "metatechnic" science, redhot from the German press, is about to remake the world. "The empiricism of blundering business has failed. Just as in the field of science the theory of determinism has been abandoned, so elsewhere is Physicalism inadequate. Industry, as the tool of an advancing civilization and culture, must become directional, teleologic. No longer can the physical dominate the mental; the supremacy is that of the imagination, the abstract." Only Mr. Larson's imagination. And we will not encourage it to build houses or a new society. What could be more absurd than a theory of reform of housing (and thus society) by engineering skill which rejects determinism in physics? But Mr. Larson has thought very little about these matters; almost every phrase in his scientific pronouncements is third hand and befuddled. He has merely swallowed hastily and only incompletely digested an English abstract of a speech on "metatechnics" by the rector of the technical school of Karlsruhe, Prof. R. Plank. He has taken from it only those items agreeable to his supreme, abstract imagination.

Despite Mr. Larson's lyrical rejection of the "physical," Mr. Fuller guarantees us that the new improvements in housing "today are in the hands of the most advanced scientific circles, such as those which establish the mechanical compositions of light or sound sensitive vibration cells." What he means is that projects for profitable cheap housing are being studied in the laboratories of the General Motors Company, A. O. Smith Company, etc.

Mr. Larson has a great deal more to say about the expanding universe and the future of mankind; but I will not quote any further specimen of his scientific opinions. I mention, however, as indicative of the social attitudes that often go with such views his optimistic account of recent human progress under capitalism (poverty, suicide, war and lynchings unmentioned) and his remarkable nationalistic statement that the "fusion of races is almost complete,"—this in the United States with 12,000,000 Negroes and an appropriation for deporting radical aliens!

There are two more articles by S.S.A.'s which have a direct

interest for the *New Masses*. One is Mr. Lönberg-Holm's criticisms of the award of a prize for the design of the Palace of Soviets to Hector Hamilton; the other is Mr. Sherman's comment on my own article in the May issue of the *New Masses*. Mr. Lönberg-Holm properly attacks the award, for Hamilton's project is an inept affair, dressed up too much like the monuments of big-business in America to serve a Communist republic. But though he is right to condemn the choice on symbolic-aesthetic grounds, he expresses the aesthetic sentimentality of his group in inferring from it that "political communism and pragmatic capitalism are no more different than the space symbols they select." The correspondence between artistic forms and society is not so thoroughgoing that they can be so mystically identified. The Russians still speak the language of pre-revolutionary days. Especially in a period of revolution, it is to be expected that a new society will retain inferior forms of the preceding. The award to Hamilton is only one detail in a thousand in present Soviet life; besides, the prize-design was unsatisfactory and will not be carried out.

Finally, if the newer techniques of building, for which Lönberg-Holm speaks, imply a socialized function and are more consistent with Soviet planning, they do not necessarily by themselves produce socialism, as the S.S.A. would like to believe. Arts, like cinema and printing, also imply a public consumption, in contrast to privately owned, unique creations. But the cinema and the printed book, no matter how efficient technically, no matter how cheap and accessible to the entire public, are also the vehicles of class interests and are themselves a means of exploitation. As a perfected technique architecture points to the greatest social possibilities; but these possibilities cannot be realized in their fullness in a capitalist society where technical advances are inseparable from exploitation and misery. Russia is today the only country in the world in which the new types of housing are accessible to the working class. Elsewhere they are limited to the bourgeoisie and to the small minority of better-paid workers; and even then, they are constructed with municipal subsidy.

Mr. Sherman's article, entitled "Transition," seems to embody the views of the S.S.A. on Communism and revolution. It con-



A. Refregier

tains hardly a just remark, and betrays the weakness of thought evident in the articles already discussed.

First, he attributes the lack of a national idiom of design in America, not to peculiarities of the social-economic structure or to the conditions of architectural production in the last hundred years, but to the mixture of peoples. This is false, since not only have all individual, single-tongued nations of Europe had a similar diversity of design in the 19th century, but in America itself, architectural types have been produced mainly, if not only, by Anglo-Saxon architects till very recently; and in fact, it might be said that the tendency to unification of type has received an impetus in the last few years from foreign architects, who have settled in the United States, as well as from industrial standardization.

In commenting on my article he agrees that the most developed modern architecture implies radical social changes. Like Mr. Fuller he says that "we face a social revolution and must accept its responsibilities." In listing the "potentials of a new order of affairs" he includes the "changing outlook of proprietary interests due to an increasing public repudiation of current economic customs" and the "definite trend toward decentralization." But J. P. Morgan's outlook has not changed, and it is his outlook which counts in Mr. Sherman's industrial-financial world. The imaginary public repudiation he speaks of (does he refer perhaps to the recent sermons reported in the *Monday Times*?) has not had the most trivial effect on unemployment, on the drastic wage-reductions of the poorest classes, on the public attitude to strikers and the suspension of civil rights, on police lawlessness, lynchings and the Scottsboro crime, on the expense for armaments and the international preparations against Russia and China, and on a hundred crucial evils produced by "current economic customs." The meaning of "customs" here is really psychological; it is similar to the idea of another S.S.A. that the present "exigencies" might be solved by "over-all social-economic adjustments too long delayed in their solution by the arbitrary *slight* of a money-grubbing world." This conception of money-grubbing as the cause is typical of moral liberalism which neglects institutions and social fixtures. It follows from this that if everybody, including the workers, could be persuaded by some deeply persuasive philosopher, not to grub money, on the ground that it is unnatural and therefore not really the best life, all would be well with us again.

Not merely customs, but institutions must be repudiated, and not merely repudiated, but abolished,—something Mr. Sherman has no eyes for, no understanding. For like his colleagues he trusts the "American preferred evolution" and would "not fight forces, but use them." This is advice to the unemployed; do not fight bosses, use them; reeducate them for service and for Universal Architecture.

What Mr. Sherman's "new order of affairs" will be like he does not say. He rejects communism as unsound, too static, in fact, for creative capitalism; and he cites in proof that Stalin has introduced "industrial captains, identical with capitalistic practice,—a beneficial heresy that proves the fallacy of communism." Evidently Mr. Sherman thinks that a Russian industrial captain is the same as an American captain of industry. Perhaps capitalism and communism are the same thing, for he writes a little later that the "revolution has in fact arrived. Various heralded for years, it is at last in our midst, bloodless, brought about by the tacit, widespread recognition of basic facts." This intangible and invisible, as well as inaudible, revolution has also the reassuring quality of impotence. For the facts to the recognition of which the writer attributes the present state of revolution,—"first that the business-only-for-profit system is no longer capable of adequately fulfilling our needs; secondly that industry is slowly shaping a rational architectonic emergence" have even been openly, not merely tacitly, recognized by Hoover. "The administration's recent pronouncements regarding financing and home-building—though necessarily impotent—were testimonials to the national importance of both facts." Is it necessary to discuss further this obvious position according to which Hoover is a dangerous, but alas, impotent radical? This confused and largely verbal position is the sick-bed resolution of half-repentant industry, which promises to substitute for the business-only-for-profit system a government-subsidized system of business-for-profit, without sacrifice of its property or political power. It is the necessary position of Mr. Sherman, who is an editor of the *Architectural Forum*, "*Time-Fortune's* recently acquired publication for integrating the new shelter industry" by impotent testimonials to imminent progress.

The architects of the S.S.A. are victims of a professional fal-

lacy. They exaggerate the importance of housing as a lever of social change, for a lever by itself is powerless. They do not see that housing is one of many industries, and subordinate to the capitalistic production of machinery, raw materials, transports and power; and that whatever the technological advances in building, they do not alter the crucial relation of boss and worker or the present status of private property. On the contrary, such changes in technique as these architects advocate, may be even more prejudicial to the social order they desire, as long as the changes are applied by private corporations, which ruthlessly dismiss workers upon each technical innovation and ultimately produce a general lowering of real wages. The large-scale factory production of small houses to be rented to workers or to be sold to them on the installment plan is a refinement of modern "company-housing" which gives capital an effective weapon against strikers. Because of the failure to state in clear language the simplest economic facts of ownership and exploitation, the social criticism of these architects, whether intended or not, appears to be the usual preliminary smoke-screen of "social service" that precedes the revival or booming of the inflated building industries. Several pages of *Shelter* are given over to excerpts from newspapers and journals announcing the collapse of capitalism and the impending boom in the housing industries. "Mankind," says a writer in the same issue, "is on the threshold of a general industrial emergence wherein the prime activity (provision of shelter) is foreseen in all political, financial, editorial and welfare circles, pointing to an extraordinary industrialization of housing . . . Builders are applying themselves with frenzied energy (this by the critic of "money-grubbing" and over-production) to the industry that industry missed as the magazine *Fortune* puts it. Now all this is encouraging, if belated, and a healthy sign for the future."

Hence the article by Peter Stone, called *Tooling Up*, a newsy article on the latest projects and models for large-scale house production. It is a parasitic item in the present efforts of builders to obtain public subsidies for huge enterprises. Since there is the possibility that new types will be factory-made and partly metallic, new industries—aluminum, steel, automobiles, etc.—have become interested. The wealthy and the formerly prosperous middle-class have no need of houses, so the builders must turn for profit to the housing of the lower-middle-class and the better-paid workers (also a phantom minority). This project is easily stimulated by philanthropic propaganda, especially for public subsidies. The "technical" report of Mr. Stone contributes little but paraphrase of studio gossip and reports from other journals. He summarizes, without important valuations, the efforts of various firms, and encourages them. He slaps them on the back and says, attaboy General Motors, attaboy Westinghouse; he gives finally the very original suggestions of the S.S.A. (anonymous and cooperative) that a symposium be held including circus-designers and racing-sailer designers, "who have hydro as well as aerodynamics to contend with"; he suggests streamlined shelters "to be hung up in a manner such as to allow them to head into the wind."

In these conceptions of the problem we discover the meaning of the S.S.A. It is a confused liberal group of architects, who are still tied to the ideas of their masters. Though opposed to aestheticism in architecture, they remain bohemian and arty in their sentimental view of technology and the social mission of architecture. The manifesto of their leader is written in an oracular, telegraphic style, with a sort of stream-of-consciousness flow of ideas—as if he were talking to himself—in the manner of little-reviews which live for one issue.

Despite its momentary criticism of capitalism, which is not very different from the aesthete's, or even the industrialist's distress before a specific, unprofitable inefficiency, this group has not liberated itself from the currents of capitalistic enterprise and is innocently booming a privately-owned industry under the mistaken thought that it is reforming the universe. The technicians who offer their brains to capitalism are offering a commodity which will be bought or cast aside like any other goods.

The capitalist honors technique when it brings him profits; but the technician himself is only his tool. The technicians have power to reorganize society only as members of a solid working class movement. For a group of architects to trust technology as an automatic principle of social evolution is to commit themselves to the existing rulers of industry and to support the status quo. How clearly this comes out in the article of Mr. Sherman who concludes that the revolution has already taken place! It is the reduction to absurdity of the whole position of the S.S.A.



**Nathan Adler**

## 3 Among 30

We were thirty workers in a shirt laundry in east Harlem. The shop was a long, low ceilinged loft with raw plastered walls that time and dirt had turned grey. Six rows of tables filed down the length of the loft in measured beat. At the head of the room stood the broad deep drums in which the shirts were washed, and beside them the steam presses that ironed the shirts. Some of the presses were like those commonly seen in neighborhood tailor shops; there was another machine for pressing sleeves. It consisted of two highly polished metal arms—the sleeves were slipped over them and the steam did the rest. All through the day these gleaming, silver arms were raised high, stiff and mute, blocking our eyes.

When the shirts came back from the presses they were distributed among the girls at the tables. Here they were given the finishing touches and folded. For twelve numb hours the girls stood before their tables, ironing and folding the shirts. They were paid two cents for every shirt they finished and that these two cents might multiply more and more, they kept at the table all day long, stopping at noon for a sandwich and returning immediately to their work.

Summer and winter a sullen heat hung low in the loft and we worked in our undershirts, men and women alike. When the electricity was flowing into the irons a little red light showed on a post raised to the right of the tables. Sometimes when the machines became too hot the girls stopped the flow of the current. Through the loft, the small red lights flickered on and off, flitting about it seemed from table to table. There was the low, monotonous rumble of the wash wheels, the plaintive sigh of steam escaping from the presses and the dull cloplop of the irons on the table. We worked bluntly all day long, and all day, at the head of the room, the rigid steel arms were raised high, blocking our eyes.

For an hour or so every morning we worked rapidly, we felt fresh and spoke to one another of the movie we had seen the night before, or of the dance hall we had been to. Then the heaviness set and we worked silently. Above the whistle of the escaping steam someone sighed or moaned. For a moment the strain tangibly lessened in the loft. Then the blunt torpor returned again.

Every day we sang. Mam Brown who was soft spoken and pious and called everybody "chile" sighed like the steam press, then softly she began to hum a sad carressing hymn. It brought a tugging ache to the numb breast awaking it to anguish. It sang of the pain of work and the dead oppressive hours. It carried her beyond the walls, past the dead grey yard into a cool, green world and quiet and rest. It surged up within her, the melody rising like a billow in her heavy breast, wave overlapping wave, breaking open her mouth half in pain, half ecstasy.

*Swing low, sweet chariot,*

The words she sang meant the twelve hours of work; first the speed; the tiredness then, and the numbness that finally set in taking hold of her body, keeping her hands moving in spite of herself.

And as all of us worked, moving about, our hands automatically pressing and folding and shirts, we listened quietly. Perhaps one or two joined in, softly, slowly, drawing all the pain, all the balm from the song. Or shrilly and boldly, as Mam Brown sang, one of the girls declaimed something she remembered from her spelling book:

*"Behind him lay the great Azores,  
Behind the gates of Hercules;  
Before him not the ghosts of shores,  
Before him only shoreless seas."*

So we sang, above the cloplop of the irons and the low thunder of the wash wheels, joining in with Mam Brown, breaking off to listen or to sing and declaim for ourselves. Through the dense heat of the loft with its sharp smell of soap and bleach, we sang, floating away on our songs, leaving the shirt laundry far behind us.

But through the singing alone we could not escape. When the song was over, the laundry was there again. Every night we went

to the movies or to dance halls. The lights that went up at the night's close, shattering the dream world and leaving a naked white wall instead, did not matter. For a time they had forgotten and in the morning the laundry would again be bearable. At least for most of them. They accepted work without questioning and they could understand no other way than the one they now lived.

Sometimes this unchanging life mounted high in their throats, choking them. In such moments they became taut and stiff, they quarrelled with their comrades. Once this was over, they continued again, unheeding of life, unquestioning.

There were three of us who did heed, who remained unsatisfied, and could not escape through song and movie house; Nicodemus, the West Indian girl, and myself.

Nicodemus was the packer. He sorted the shirts that I gathered from the folders and distributed them into the boxes that were sent out to the retail laundries. Before the shirt ironing machinery came in, Nicodemus had been a shirt ironer in a hand laundry. He had worked in a hand laundry ironing shirts for twenty years till the machines had displaced him. He had come over from Galicia where he had been a student of the Torah and the twenty years of work hadn't changed him much. It made a worker of him, it made him discard his religion and throw away the phylacteries with which he had bound his hands every morning. When he threw away these leather strappings his hands were no longer tied and then he could fight as a worker. But he still spoke as he had spoken years ago in the yeshiva. That is, he didn't speak, he sang.

He was short with a pear shaped head and foggy brown eyes. His brown hair was streaked with grey and he had very large ears. When he became excited he would drop his sing song and shout as though he were delivering a speech. He always became angry and excited when he spoke of himself and the twenty long years he had slaved in America.

When he shouted this way the girls laughed. They thought he was crazy. They all liked him because he was mild tempered, but they laughed at him always. After working in shops for twenty years he still entered them as a stranger. He would edge in sideways, with a wheedle in his shoulders, timidly, half afraid. The girls said he walked into the shop like a beggar.

He was always forgetting things. After work he would make a speech about Russia or about psychology, or the culture of ancient Egypt. Then he would walk out and the girls had to call him back because he had forgotten his coat or his hat.

His real name was Max but no one ever called him that. I was the only one who really understood what he wanted. I was closest to him in thought, yet I laughed at him with the girls and I liked the girls more. There was something of the caricature about him. When the song of that name had become popular, the girls called him Gigolo, then Gig, for short. He was annoyed and he said, "Gigolo, shmigilo, what's this gigolo name?" But the girls went right on calling him Gig, and then he had two names, Gigolo and Nicodemus.

I had to quit school to come to work here in the shirt laundry. My parents were workers and they wanted me to avoid the shop. They wanted me to learn a profession and wear a white collar. In America you can be in the workingclass and have middle class thoughts. My family had it. Most everybody but Gigolo and myself had it in the shop. They thought I was crazy to come in there.

I had gotten the job in this shirt laundry, but I was unhappy. The place was like a jail and the work left me dead. Because I was white and the women were all Negroes, they would tease me, and it was hard to stand that, too. Gigolo and I understood each other. He would become even more eager when I agreed with him, and speaking before me, he was amplified into something beyond himself.

There was another stranger in the shop. She was a West Indian girl and spoke always of going back home. She would tell us about Jamaica and the Carribean sky, of the sugar cane that she chewed, and how she picked coffee on her father's farm.

"I must go home", she kept saying. "If I stay here another three years I'll be dead! If I go home I'll live a long time yet!" She had come to America five years before thinking to grow rich and return to her father's farm. But she could never save enough for fare home, and she kept saying, "I'll be dead in no time if I stay here. I tell you I've got to go back."

One morning she came in and said, "You know, I dreamed I was home last night picking coffee—now is coffee time, too." The



girls laughed at her. They always did. They called her monkey-chaser because she was Jamaican.

Momma taunted her once, "Go on, you'll die here in America. All us niggers die at forty."

She had become half hysterical. "O, no, no I tell you, I don't want no snow on me, I ain't goin' to die in this goddamned country. I want green grass when I die."

"You're a nut", Momma grunted in her hoarse masculine voice. Momma was a short, fat Port Rican woman of about fifty. Many times through the day she bent down under her table, spreading her legs apart and lifting her buttocks high in air, to drag at a cigar from which she was always stealing smokes.

All the day through her hoarse voice called across the loft about how many times she got it last night, and that she was hot in the box, and whether she could fix me up with a girl. She said she knew a swell colored girl whose name was Fanny Sweetland and she would laugh at the Sweetland part of it and say, "Yeh, like milk and honey, and you can get that sweetness if you's smart."

Gigolo became angry. "Why are you so stupid, why does your mind turn on one foolishness only, box, schmox. Pooh", he said in disgust. "You're cattle all of you, and I am harnessed to you. If I want to go free I've got to drag you with me."

"When we are like this, separate", Gigolo continued in his sing-song voice, "we are like fingers separate, and we can't do anything. We've got to come together. When we come together and we are a fist, then we can do anything. A fist can smash, break, destroy."

The boss came in. We resumed work and no more was said. He stopped to talk to the folders and kidded them. He let his hands wander where they didn't belong, too. He never stopped to talk or to pet the pressers. They were paid by the week and it would have been on his time then, not theirs. In passing, he felt up Momma and after he walked out, she yelled, "That goddamned son of a hoonah! Why don't he feel up the week work girls?"

It was this way every day. Every day the same faces were there, the same things were said. Every week we washed and pressed the same shirts over again, we sang the same songs, we said the same words, hanging on to some one syllabled street word and saying it over and over as if it held all the pain of our swollen lives.

After a while it got so I couldn't stand the shop any more. But if I left there would be some other shop, there would be other faces; but the numbness would still be there.

One morning the West Indian girl fainted at her table. When she came to, she took the remainder of the morning off and went out to a clinic. The last few months she had grown thinner and she coughed constantly, but no one had paid any attention to it. We all coughed in the thick, smelly air.

She returned at noon when we were sitting at our tables, eating the dry sandwiches that were our lunch.

"How you feel, Chile?", Mam Brown asked.

"Doctor says I got TB. He says I got to go to Colorado."

"All niggers dies at forty", Momma said.

"Don't worry," Gigolo said. "We'll all chip in money and you can go away. Then you'll become well again."

"O, no, no I say. This city is hell, sure 'nough, but I ain't goin' to leave here. I ain't goin' to bury myself deeper in this goddamned country. New York is bad enough. Least there's boats here and I stand some chance of gettin' home. There ain't goin' to be no snow over me, I tell you. I want green grass when I die."

"But what you gonna do, Chile?" Mam Brown asked.

"What *can* I do?" her voice questioned. "I can't do nothing. I just got to stay on here and maybe I'll get home someway."

The girls returned to their tables. Not too much time to spare, even for a comrade. The two cent pieces had to be gathered. The pressers stepped on the pedals and the steam escaped in a plaintive sigh. At the tables the dull clomp of the irons began again.

I saw the West Indian girl at her table, the iron in her hand. Down the room, over her head, the dead, steel arms were raised in a mute prayer. Through the loft the little red lights flickered. Nicodemus worked at his table, packing the shirts. The paper rustled in his hands as he worked.

I didn't want to run away, yet I hated the work. My parents' seed was bearing fruit. It was wrong and I knew that wasn't the way, but I was going. I hadn't even the courage to ask the boss for my pay. I took my hat, and edging out sideways, I sneaked off.

Nicodemus is right. Escape is only for the moment, and it solves nothing. I was ashamed of myself, yet I left. In an empty lot I sat down to think. There was no grass there; only a dead tree standing. Instead of brown autumn leaves, bits of soiled brown wrapping paper curled up about the trunk of the tree.

In my mind's eye, I saw Momma again, complaining that the boss didn't feel up the week workers. I heard Mam Brown singing her spirituals and the West Indian shouting she wanted green grass when she died. Again I heard Nicodemus' words. Separate we are like fingers. When we come together we will be a fist.

## J. LOUIS ENGDAHL

J. Louis Engdahl, a leader in the revolutionary struggles of the working class for the past thirty years, died in Moscow, Nov. 21.

At the time of his death, he was National Chairman of the International Labor Defense, and was in the U. S. S. R. attending the world congress of the International Red Aid as I. L. D. delegate. His death, from pneumonia, was a direct result of his untiring activity in defense of the nine Scottsboro boys. With Ada Wright, mother of two of the boys, he had just completed a six-months tour of Europe, mobilizing the international mass-pressure which played an important part in forcing the U. S. Supreme Court to grant the boys a new trial. Hounded by the social-democrats and police, expelled twice from Belgium, from Czechoslovakia, he was worn down in health and strength, but carried on the European Scottsboro-Mooney campaign to a successful conclusion.

Engdahl's literary activities on behalf of the revolutionary movement are well known. He was a vigorous, fighting writer on working class subjects. As editor of Socialist organs in the pre-war days, he was a leader of the struggle on the cultural and agitational front. Later, upon the foundation of the *Daily Worker*, central organ of the Communist Party, in 1924, he became a co-editor, and served in that capacity for several years. In 1928 he became general secretary of the International Labor Defense. The last national convention of that organization, last October, elected him national chairman.

## What Is Calverton?

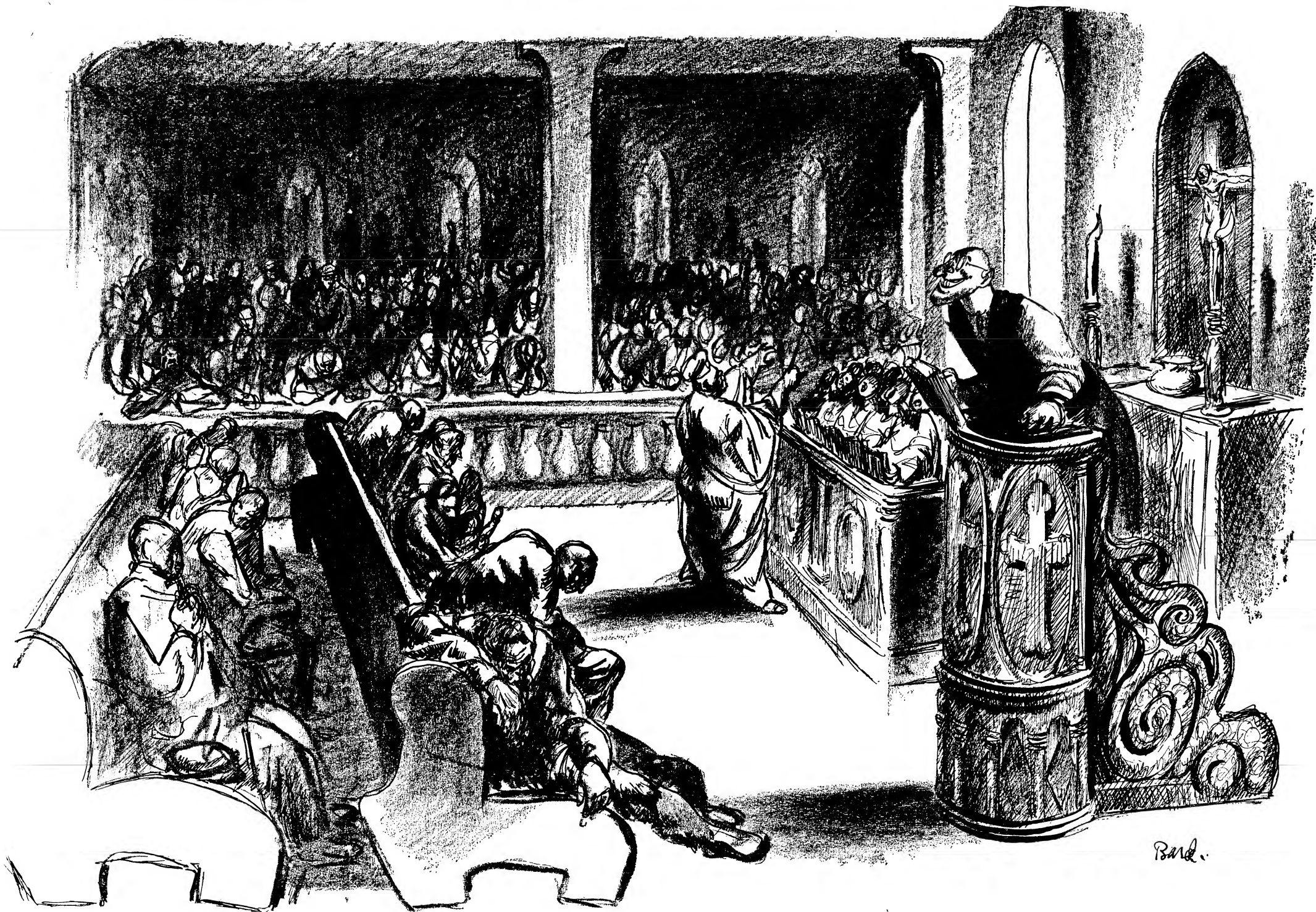
### The Marxism of V. F. Calverton

by DAVID RAMSEY and ALAN CALMER

in the January issue of the New Masses

ORDER YOUR COPY NOW!

15c a copy at newsstands; \$1.50 a year.



"THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD—I SHALL NOT WANT."

Phil Bard



## PITY AND TERROR

Philip Rahv's article, *The Literary Class War*, in the August *New Masses* raises a number of theoretical questions of extreme importance. Unfortunately his article is such a weird compound of truth, half-truth and pure rubbish that it serves more to confuse than to clarify.

Comrade Rahv's article develops two chief theoretical formulations:

1. The theory of katharsis as applied to proletarian art.
2. The theory of contemporary bourgeois art as an expression of the psychology of consumption, the psychology of the parasite finance-capitalist bourgeoisie.

### I

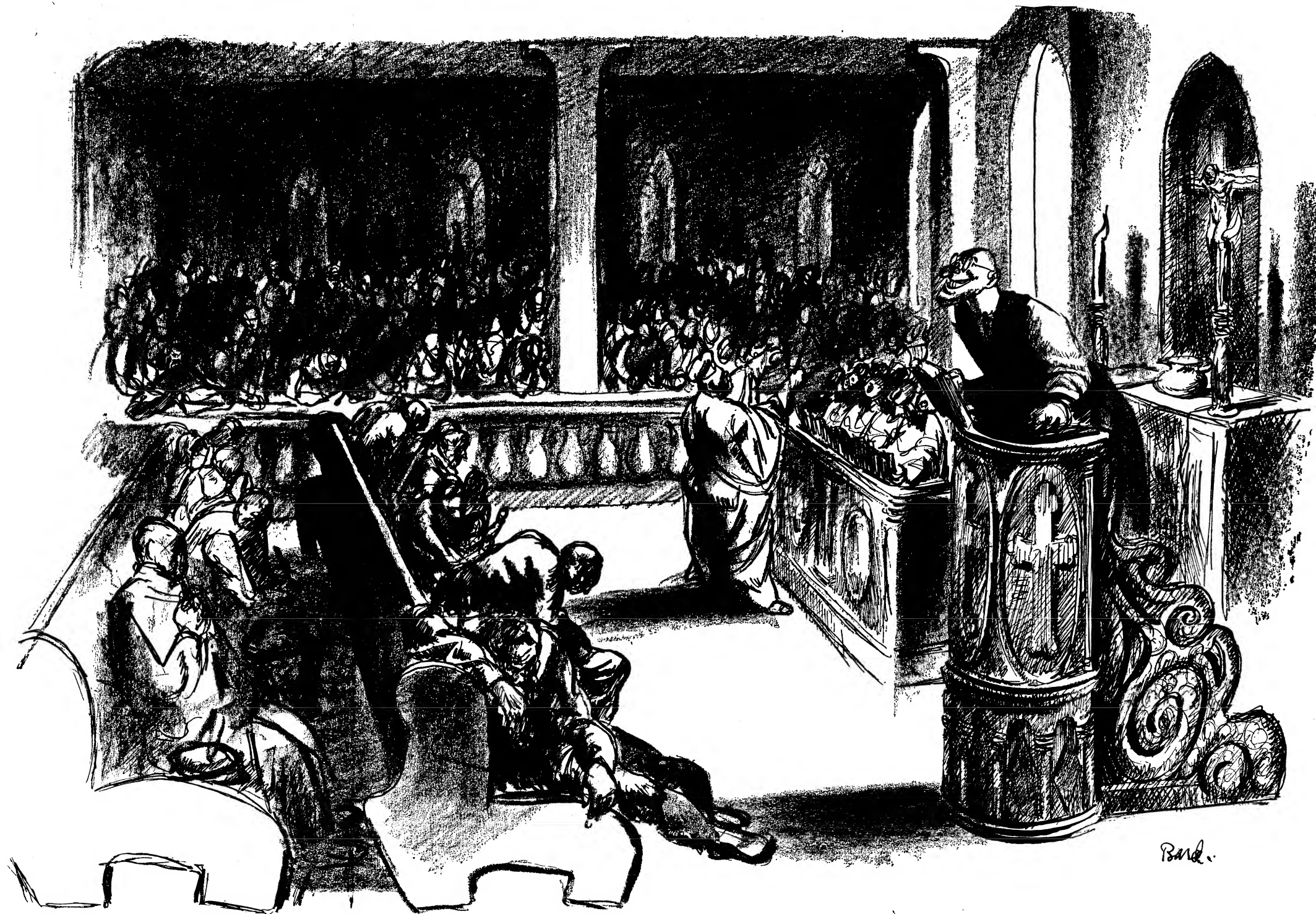
Comrade Rahv's modernized version of the Aristotelian concept of katharsis has something of the quality of a historical joke. It is a little too "original"; expose it to the fresh air of Marxism and you'll find a corpse in an advanced state of decomposition. For Aristotle katharsis, the quality of purging the emotions through pity and terror, was the indispensable condition of great tragedy; Rahv adds a third ingredient, "militancy", and makes this new katharsis the condition of—proletarian literature. Instead of the Aristotelian narrowness, which confined the conception of katharsis to tragedy, we have a truly democratic katharsis that includes by implication every type of literature, as well as other art forms. To do this Comrade Rahv had to overlook more than 2,000 years of history; he had to overlook the fact that *the entire conception of katharsis and its specific expression in the form of pity and terror are inextricably bound up with the ideology of the ruling class of ancient Greece*. Thus, viewed from the standpoint of Greek philosophy of the 4th century B. C., the katharsis of Rahv is a parody since it adds, arbitrarily, an alien element and widens its scope in such a way as to destroy its very foundations; viewed from the standpoint of Marxism, it is nothing but idealist scholasticism. If Marxism teaches us anything, it teaches us that one cannot take a historically reactionary idea and make it revolutionary simply by adding another element. The history of ideas is not a system of pigeonholes from which one takes what one needs. Rahv has here fallen victim to obvious eclecticism; he has stood the entire method of dialectical materialism (not to mention Aristotle's *Poetics*) on its head.

Rahv tells us, furthermore, that without katharsis artistic creation "loses all significance, loses that high gravity which is the most characteristic function [sic!] of art." (Emphasis mine.—A.B.M.) An amazing statement for a proletarian critic to make. This talk about "high gravity" in art is simply the usual bourgeois professorial chatter that can be heard in any freshwater college—an echo of the old snobism of ruling class esthetics which condemned comedy to a low rung on the ladder of art because it concerned itself with "the common people", while the "high gravity" of tragedy was reserved for the representatives of the ruling class. Is Rahv actually prepared to rule out of the domain of art the works of Chaucer, Swift, Rabelais, Cervantes, Moliere etc. because they have sinned against "high gravity"?

Let us examine this revamped katharsis more closely. It consists of three elements: pity, terror and militancy, with militancy as the dialectic synthesis of the other two. Terror implies fear; it is an emotion that either tends to paralyze all action or to produce action of a spontaneous, uncontrolled kind. But Rahv mixes terror with pity and gets not simply action, but the organized, disciplined action ("militancy," "a revolutionary deed") of the revolutionary proletariat. Truly a miracle in dialectics that not even a Marx could perform.

But the full ripened absurdity of Rahv's thesis becomes evident as soon as he attempts to apply it concretely. He writes: "A proletarian drama . . . inspires the spectator with pity as he identifies himself with the characters on the stage; he is terror-stricken by the horror of workers' existence under capitalism: but these two emotions finally fuse in the white heat of battle into a revolutionary deed, with the weapon of proletarian class-will in the hands of the masses."

I have seen a number of proletarian and near-proletarian dramas not only in the United States, but in the Soviet Union as well. It is possible that I am peculiarly insensitive, but while



"THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD—I SHALL NOT WANT."

Phil Bard

I have on occasion (though not invariably) felt pity for the characters on the stage, I don't recall a single instance where I was "terror-stricken by the horror of workers' existence under capitalism." How many readers of *New Masses* were filled with terror when they read Whittaker Chambers' story, *Can You Hear Their Voices*, which is one of the outstanding achievements of American proletarian literature? Where is the terror in Gladkov's *Cement*, Eisenstein's *Old and New*, Gropper's drawings, the music of *Budenny's March*?

On the contrary, terror is an emotion absolutely alien to the revolutionary proletariat, incompatible with militant class action. One can, however, plausibly conceive of a *capitalist* spectator at a proletarian drama experiencing Rahv's katharsis: he is filled with pity for his fellow-capitalists in the play, and with terror as he sees in their fate the possibility of his own, and consequently he is moved to militant action (wage-cuts, speedup etc.) against the workers in his factory!

Comrade Rahv next turns his weapons on bourgeois literature and comes to the conclusion that its "impotence . . . is best evidenced by the utter lack of katharsis within it; it is no longer capable of its traditional static signification." Since no first-rate bourgeois critic of the present day uses the naive criteria of Aristotle to test a work of art any more than he uses the three classical unities, Rahv is compelled once more to repair to the academic hall for corroboration. And he calls in the devil's advocate, none other than Prof. Irving Babbitt, chief ideologist of the most reactionary trend in contemporary American bourgeois literature—the high-priest of literary fascism—whom he cites against Dreiser's *American Tragedy*. But if Rahv can go back to Aristotle for his concept of the nature and function of proletarian art, why shouldn't he go for critical weapons to Professor Babbitt who has the advantage over Aristotle of being a living instead of a dead corpse? Rahv seems to have rounded out his historical joke in truly dialectic fashion: working by contradictions, he arrives at a union of the living and the dead.

Fortunately Comrade Rahv has not been quite so "original" in his second theoretical formulation, which he has taken from one of the leading theoreticians of international Marxism, N. Bukharin. Bukharin's exposition in the Introduction to his *Economic Theory of the Leisure Class* of the psychology of the proletarian (producer) as opposed to the psychology of the rentier (consumer) has provided Rahv with genuinely revolutionary, genuinely scientific critical instruments; and he has made a valid contribution by attempting to apply Bukharin's theoretical formulation concretely in the field of literature. Rahv correctly shows the general trend of development in bourgeois literature as expressed in the work of a number of writers, but he falls into the error of one-sided schematism and oversimplification through failure to consider the specific tendencies that have been produced by the social changes of the past two decades. Bukharin's book was completed in the fall of 1914; in discussing the psychology of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat he was able to give at that time

A. B. MAGIL

## PITY AND TERROR

Philip Rahv's article, *The Literary Class War*, in the August *New Masses* raises a number of theoretical questions of extreme importance. Unfortunately his article is such a weird compound of truth, half-truth and pure rubbish that it serves more to confuse than to clarify.

Comrade Rahv's article develops two chief theoretical formulations:

1. The theory of katharsis as applied to proletarian art.
2. The theory of contemporary bourgeois art as an expression of the psychology of consumption, the psychology of the parasite finance-capitalist bourgeoisie.

### I

Comrade Rahv's modernized version of the Aristotelian concept of katharsis has something of the quality of a historical joke. It is a little too "original"; expose it to the fresh air of Marxism and you'll find a corpse in an advanced state of decomposition. For Aristotle katharsis, the quality of purging the emotions through pity and terror, was the indispensable condition of great tragedy; Rahv adds a third ingredient, "militancy", and makes this new katharsis the condition of—proletarian literature. Instead of the Aristotelian narrowness, which confined the conception of katharsis to tragedy, we have a truly democratic katharsis that includes by implication every type of literature, as well as other art forms. To do this Comrade Rahv had to overlook more than 2,000 years of history; he had to overlook the fact that *the entire conception of katharsis and its specific expression in the form of pity and terror are inextricably bound up with the ideology of the ruling class of ancient Greece*. Thus, viewed from the standpoint of Greek philosophy of the 4th century B. C., the katharsis of Rahv is a parody since it adds, arbitrarily, an alien element and widens its scope in such a way as to destroy its very foundations; viewed from the standpoint of Marxism, it is nothing but idealist scholasticism. If Marxism teaches us anything, it teaches us that one cannot take a historically reactionary idea and make it revolutionary simply by adding another element. The history of ideas is not a system of pigeonholes from which one takes what one needs. Rahv has here fallen victim to obvious eclecticism; he has stood the entire method of dialectical materialism (not to mention Aristotle's *Poetics*) on its head.

Rahv tells us, furthermore, that without katharsis artistic creation "loses all significance, loses that high gravity which is the most characteristic function [sic!] of art." (Emphasis mine.—A.B.M.) An amazing statement for a proletarian critic to make. This talk about "high gravity" in art is simply the usual bourgeois professorial chatter that can be heard in any freshwater college—an echo of the old snobbism of ruling class esthetics which condemned comedy to a low rung on the ladder of art because it concerned itself with "the common people", while the "high gravity" of tragedy was reserved for the representatives of the ruling class. Is Rahv actually prepared to rule out of the domain of art the works of Chaucer, Swift, Rabelais, Cervantes, Moliere etc. because they have sinned against "high gravity"?

Let us examine this revamped katharsis more closely. It consists of three elements: pity, terror and militancy, with militancy as the dialectic synthesis of the other two. Terror implies fear; it is an emotion that either tends to paralyze all action or to produce action of a spontaneous, uncontrolled kind. But Rahv mixes terror with pity and gets not simply action, but the organized, disciplined action ("militancy," "a revolutionary deed") of the revolutionary proletariat. Truly a miracle in dialectics that not even a Marx could perform.

But the full ripened absurdity of Rahv's thesis becomes evident as soon as he attempts to apply it concretely. He writes: "A proletarian drama . . . inspires the spectator with pity as he identifies himself with the characters on the stage; he is terror-stricken by the horror of workers' existence under capitalism: but these two emotions finally fuse in the white heat of battle into a revolutionary deed, with the weapon of proletarian class-will in the hands of the masses."

I have seen a number of proletarian and near-proletarian dramas not only in the United States, but in the Soviet Union as well. It is possible that I am peculiarly insensitive, but while



"THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD—I SHALL NOT W"

I have on occasion (though not invariably) felt pity for the characters on the stage, I don't recall a single instance where I was "terror-stricken by the horror of workers' existence under capitalism." How many readers of *New Masses* were filled with terror when they read Whittaker Chambers' story, *Can You Hear Their Voices*, which is one of the outstanding achievements of American proletarian literature? Where is the terror in Gladkov's *Cement*, Eisenstein's *Old and New*, Gropper's drawings, the music of *Budenny's March*?

On the contrary, terror is an emotion absolutely alien to the revolutionary proletariat, incompatible with militant class action. One can, however, plausibly conceive of a *capitalist* spectator at a proletarian drama experiencing Rahv's katharsis: he is filled with pity for his fellow-capitalists in the play, and with terror as he sees in their fate the possibility of his own, and consequently he is moved to militant action (wage-cuts, speedup etc.) against the workers in his factory!





ALL NOT WANT."

Phil Bard

Comrade Rahv next turns his weapons on bourgeois literature and comes to the conclusion that its "impotence . . . is best evidenced by the utter lack of katharsis within it; it is no longer capable of its traditional static signification." Since no first-rate bourgeois critic of the present day uses the naive criteria of Aristotle to test a work of art any more than he uses the three classical unities, Rahv is compelled once more to repair to the academic hall for corroboration. And he calls in the devil's advocate, none other than Prof. Irving Babbitt, chief ideologist of the most reactionary trend in contemporary American bourgeois literature—the high-priest of literary fascism—whom he cites against Dreiser's *American Tragedy*. But if Rahv can go back to Aristotle for his concept of the nature and function of proletarian art, why shouldn't he go for critical weapons to Professor Babbitt who has the advantage over Aristotle of being a living instead of a dead corpse? Rahv seems to have rounded out his historical joke in truly dialectic fashion: working by contradictions, he arrives at a union of the living and the dead.

Fortunately Comrade Rahv has not been quite so "original" in his second theoretical formulation, which he has taken from one of the leading theoreticians of international Marxism, N. Bukharin. Bukharin's exposition in the Introduction to his *Economic Theory of the Leisure Class* of the psychology of the proletarian (producer) as opposed to the psychology of the *rentier* (consumer) has provided Rahv with genuinely revolutionary, genuinely scientific critical instruments; and he has made a valid contribution by attempting to apply Bukharin's theoretical formulation concretely in the field of literature. Rahv correctly shows the *general* trend of development in bourgeois literature as expressed in the work of a number of writers, but he falls into the error of one-sided schematism and oversimplification through failure to consider the *specific* tendencies that have been produced by the social changes of the past two decades. Bukharin's book was completed in the fall of 1914; in discussing the psychology of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat he was able to give at that time

only a general theoretical formulation for the entire imperialist epoch. But a writer in the year 1932 must take into consideration the effect of such world-shattering phenomena as the World War, the Versailles peace, the Russian Revolution, the rise of fascism, and the present economic crisis, all of which are specific, as distinguished from the general, features of imperialist decline. This Comrade Rahv has failed to do. (One of the basic shortcomings of his entire article is, in fact, this tendency to consider the problems of proletarian literature in a vacuum of abstract esthetics without relation to the concrete class struggle and the needs of the working masses.) Bukharin himself has amplified his original theory in a later book. There he speaks of the great post-war economic and social crisis of capitalism as "shattering its entire cultural structure to its very foundations" and "producing among the ruling classes a psychology of despair, of profound skepticism . . . a lack of confidence in one's own forces, in the power of the intellect in general", resulting in a return to mysticism, to occult rites, etc. (*Historical Materialism*, p. 187.) He also shows the effect on German art of "the military collapse and the Peace of Versailles on the one hand, and the constant menace of a proletarian uprising on the other" (*Ibid*, pp. 201-202).

The same tendency toward abstract and schematic thinking is evident in Rahv's comments on the various experimental movements. While it is correct in general to say that these extravagant esthetic cults, with their preoccupation with form and their reduction of idea, as in the case of the Da-daists, to virtual zero, are "end-phenomena of a dying class", this does not establish specific social tendencies. What Comrade Rahv fails to understand is that some of these florid outbursts are the expression of a genuine protest (a confused, petty-bourgeois anarchist protest, it is true) against the existing order. And consequently he fails to see that individual writers and even entire groups may under certain conditions be won over to the side of the revolutionary proletariat. The great Soviet poet, Mayakovsky, began his career as a futurist; the outstanding proletarian poet of Germany, Johannes R. Becher, was one of the leading post-war expressionists.

The Kharkov Conference of revolutionary writers and artists, held in November, 1930, recognized the positive value of some of the experimental movements when it declared concerning French Surrealism:

"This tendency is the reaction of the younger generation of highly qualified petty-bourgeois intellectuals to the contradictions of the third stage in the development of capitalism. Not having been able at first to make a profound Marxist analysis of this period of cultural reaction against which they revolted, the surrealists sought an escape in the creation of their own peculiar literary method. The first attempts to fight against bourgeois individualism by this creative method, while not departing from idealism in substance, facilitated the passage of several members of the group to a Communist ideology." (*Resolution on Proletarian and Revolutionary Literature in France*, published in Special

Kharkov Conference Number of *Literature of the World Revolution*, p. 103. *Emphasis mine.*—A.B.M.)

Moreover, one cannot simply sweep away all these new experimental forms as so much chaff. Another prominent Marxist theoretician, A. Lunacharsky, in an essay on *Marxism and Art* has pointed out that even in the period of its decline the art of a dying social class is still capable of making significant contributions in the field of form. And we might add that the innovations of individual bourgeois writers, when based on acute psychological perceptions, can, forged anew under the hammer of dialectical materialism, serve to enrich the arsenal of proletarian art and make possible a fuller and truer picture of objective reality.

### III

The concluding part of Comrade Rahv's article, in which he discusses our attitude toward the fellow-travellers, treats a question of enormous theoretical and practical importance for the proletarian literary movement of this country. Unfortunately, here too Rahv has substituted abstract schematism and formalism for the living dialectics of Marxism. His attitude toward the petty-bourgeois writers who are groping their way toward the revolutionary workingclass is one of suspicion and distrust mingled with didactic condescension—a call for "a lenient attitude" in view of their present benighted condition. He considers it inevitable that "most bourgeois writers will swing towards fascism, while only a few, the most honest, the least dominated by delusions, will join the proletariat." We must not underestimate the fascist danger in the field of culture; but such a fatalistic, capitulatory attitude as Comrade Rahv's is merely an unconscious echo of the social-democratic theory of the inevitability of fascism (which has borne fruit in the social-democratic practice of blazing the trail for the fascist dictatorship). Just how many writers will swing towards bourgeois reaction and how many toward the proletarian revolution will depend, not on pre-conceived, fatalistic notions, but on a number of historical factors of both an objective and subjective kind. And not least among the subjective factors determining the extent, the direction and the intensity of the swing is the concrete ideological and organizational work that will be carried on by those who fight under the banner of militant Marxism, the proletarian writers themselves. Moreover, while an active middle course is becoming increasingly difficult for the intellectuals, passivity is always possible, and in certain situations this also may work to the advantage of the revolutionary class. Remember how Lenin pointed out the necessity of neutralizing the bourgeois intelligentsia in a revolutionary crisis. But how can one talk of neutralizing anyone who is foredoomed to become a fascist?

Frightened by this bogey of a vast army of fascist writers, it is only natural that Comrade Rahv should assume a stern tone towards the fellow-travellers and should tell them categorically that unless "they make the Marxian world-view their own and evidence a comprehensive understanding of it", they will inevitably "desert and re-join the bourgeoisie." This will probably be shattering news to Theodore Dreiser and Romain Rolland who are not at all likely to "make the Marxian world-view their own" and who are now faced with the certainty of sliding back into the bourgeois mire. I am not so rash as to predict that Dreiser and Rolland will not hearken to the bourgeois Circe, but I merely want to point out that even in the Soviet Union, where proletarian culture is dominant, there still exist fellow-travellers who in the years of revolution and civil war somehow managed to keep from rejoining the bourgeoisie despite the fact that they had not made the Marxian world-view their own. And one might also point out that Comrade Rahv makes demands of writers which not even the Communist Party makes of its members.

Contrast Rahv's attitude with that of the Kharkov Conference: "At the present moment we are faced with a new influx of allies. The ranks of petty-bourgeois writers throwing in their lot with that of the working class are being greatly reinforced. The re-education of these comrades, as well as of all those who come to us, is a most complicated and responsible task. To transform them into active fighters of the proletarian battle front, to remould them—this is the task set for the proletarian literary movement. This is rather a problem of guidance, not of command." (*Resolution on Political and Creative Questions, Literature of the World Revolution, Special Number*, pp. 89-90. *Emphasis mine.*—A.B.M.)

Rahv's "leftist" attitude toward the fellow-travellers is actually an expression of a lack of faith in the rapidly developing forces



DEMONSTRATION

Gilbert Rocke



*DEMONSTRATION*

*Gilbert Rocke*



*DEMONSTRATION*

*Gilbert Rocke*





"YOU DANCE DIVINELY, MR. LIPPMAN."

Maurice Becker

of the proletarian literary movement and their ability to guide the new recruits from the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia. These forces will develop, as the experience of other countries has shown, to a greater and greater extent out of the ranks of the workingclass itself and especially from among the workers correspondents of the revolutionary press. Rahv's pessimistic perspective in regard to the fellow-travellers is closely connected with the idea expressed in the very opening sentence of his article to the effect that "in the capitalist countries proletarian literature has as yet not reached adulthood"—this, despite the rise of the mature, full-blooded proletarian literatures of Germany and Japan, which have produced works that can be favorably compared with the best of Soviet proletarian literature.

Rahv concludes his article by swinging from ultra-left to right: he caps confusion with more confusion by quoting Lenin out of context. The quotation reads: "The party of the proletariat must learn to catch every liberal just at the moment when he is prepared to move forward an inch, and compel him to move forward a yard. If he is obstinate and won't, we shall go forward without him, and over his body."

Here again Rahv shows his peculiar weakness for transporting ideas from one historical setting to one that is totally different. The quotation is the concluding sentence of Lenin's article, *Political Agitation and "the Class Point-of-View"* (not *The Class Point-of-View*, as Comrade Rahv calls it), published in *Iskra* in February, 1902. It was written before the first bourgeois democratic revolution in Russia (1905) as part of a polemical campaign against the theoreticians of "Economism," an anti-Marxist trend within the Russian Socialist movement which later gave birth to menshevism. Lenin in this article and in many others based himself on the elementary Marxian proposition that the proletariat supports every historically progressive movement, and in semi-feudal countries or those fighting for national liberation or unification it comes forward as the leader of *all* the forces of democra-

cy. Lenin in this article speaks of "our allies in the camp of bourgeois democracy" and shows how essential it is *in the Russia of 1902* for the Socialist movement to support every protest, no matter how mild, against czarist absolutism, not only on the part of the liberal bourgeoisie, but even of the nobility. Had Lenin urged this in an entirely different situation, let us say, after March 1917, when the bourgeois-democratic was already developing into the proletarian revolution, he would not only have travestied Leninism, but made impossible the existence of the Soviet Union today.

But in advanced capitalist countries the party of the proletariat, as well as the cultural movement of the proletariat, goes forward not through alliance with the liberals, but in irreconcilable struggle against them. Our allies are those who, breaking with treacherous bourgeois liberalism, seek their way, however falteringly, toward the world of all power to the workers. These, still filled with many of their bourgeois prejudices, require not sermons and decrees, not "Communist snobbery", as Lenin called it, but a personal approach and comradely guidance. And let us remember that these new allies are coming not merely to the proletarian literary movement, which in this country is at present very weak, but to the knowledge, the experience, the revolutionary clear-sightedness and intransigence of a movement that is international in scope, that sets itself heroic goals embracing every field of human activity.

● The *New Masses Book Service* is designed to offer authoritative answers to inquiries and efficient and courteous service. All the latest pamphlets, periodicals, and books of all publishers can be secured promptly from us, with postage free on orders of more than a dollar. A further service—we will keep you informed of the latest revolutionary publications. Why not open an account with us and receive books on publication?



"YOU DANCE DIVINELY, MR. LIPPMAN."

*Maurice Becker*



"YOU DANCE DIVINELY, MR. LIPPMAN."

Maurice Becker

## CHARLES YALE HARRISON

## THE SIDEWALKS OF NEW YORK

## 1. THE DEATH OF ANDREA SALSEDO

*Coraggio!* Seven long weeks. Good God, spring is here; in the streets below this morning I saw the trees in the square bursting into leaf. Ah, seven long weeks and all about me heavy red faces, hairy hands, soulless eyes. Hands that double up and smash into my face. But I will not speak, no, never! See, that pale-faced sadist, the tall one over there in the corner, he of the gimlet eyes and the narrow idiotic forehead. He is the master of my life. *Agents provocateurs!* Torturers! Torquemadas! No, I will never tell you. You will never tear the names of my comrades from me. Yes, beat me, send your cowardly fists crashing into my face. I can laugh at you now. My face is numb with pain, I can no longer feel. I will not look at him, I will think other thoughts, pleasant thoughts. When I was seven years old my father took me to work in a brickyard five miles from our village; we walked as the sun came up, eating our breakfast of bread and cheese, laughing. He's dead now, died of bitter toil. The sweet-smelling Sicilian flowers in the spring. Yesterday I saw the buds, delicate brown-green, but now it is night, black and yellow. The glare of the light hurts my eyes. Why do they not let me sleep? How long have I been here? Oh, yes, seven weeks. I know by the calendar on the wall, otherwise the nights would be years or centuries. My friends, where are you? My comrades, do not leave me alone with these monsters. *Diavolo!* You may stamp your boots in my face, as you have done. You may grind your heels in my eyes, send splinters of light shooting in my head. O, *mia buona Teresa*, of what use is the ideal now? Beautiful words? Thoughts? Dreams? A heavy brute now stands over me, kicking me, twisting my arm, refusing me water, laughing at my parched throat. And they filled a sponge with vinegar. Come on wop, he says to me, come on, come clean. *Spiacenti a dio e ai nemici sui.* Yes, God and his enemies have forsaken me. Teresa, Teresa, this bloody thing is the face you once loved. See, it is dawn. Another day is here but I will not live through it. How cold and cheerless is the sunrise when one is among enemies! My throat! My head! Yes, it is better to die. *Salve!*

\* \* \*

"Andrea Salsedo leaps from fourteenth floor of Park Row Building—Secretly detained for seven weeks—Deceased linked to radical group—Officials of the Department of Justice at first denied identity of body—Witnesses say body struck the sidewalk with an impact that turned it to pulp."

## 2. MR. KAMINSKY, MANUFACTURER

Up in the Bronx, not far from the Intervale station on the Seventh Avenue line, live Mr. and Mrs. Kaminsky. Kaminsky & Schloss, furriers. Kaminsky is a good husband, God knows, and a manufacturer. Works hard, brings home the money regular, never says a word. That's the trouble, never says a word. After supper, reads the *Forward* a little while and falls asleep in the easy chair. Kaminsky is a pale, thin man of about 39. Fur, you know has something to do with the lungs. So we sent him to Saranac and even to Denver for three months and now, thank God, he's all right. A good husband, on my best friend I should wish him. But a man, phooey! Kaminsky is no man. Mrs. Kaminsky is thirty-five, strong, buxom, with a will to live. Go live with Kaminsky! A man? As soon as he gets into bed he's asleep. Morris, haven't you got a word to say? No answer. Snores like a pig. Is that the sort of man a young woman wants? A fine manufacturer! If I'm doing anything wrong, believe me, it's his fault. All day long in the house, four walls. How long can one go to the movies? Louis Schwartz understands. Louis Schwartz sits in Morris Kaminsky's living room and sympathizes with Bertha Kaminsky. Could she help it? A young woman is a young woman and love will find a way. No, no, Louie! It's too late. Look, it's already five o'clock. Quick, go! I must make supper. If I give him delicatessen again, he looks at me with those sheep's eyes of his and I have to give him milk of magnesia all night. Please, Louie, no, no, once is enough. Don't forget, tomorrow is a day. Walk out like you was the insurance man.

## 3. FOUNDLING

It is nearly dawn. A. Morton Powell, *nee* Povlovsky, walked towards his Packard sedan which was parked in front of a Tenth Street speakeasy. Powell (let us not quibble over a name, today his name is Powell, take it or leave it) felt cosmic stirrings within him. Amber applejacks at fifty cents a shot; it takes three to make you feel like a king, four to feel like a czar, five to feel like hell. Well, three applejacks and one is ready to go home and face the wife. It's no cinch writing advertising copy all day. In ancient Sparta motherhood was a grim, stern calling, today all the resources of modern science are bent to ease the burden of American motherhood. Our frocks for the expectant mother (with adjustable waistline) spell grace and beauty. Powell lights a cigarette and opens the door of his car. Christ almighty, what's this? A baby! What the, who the hell! This is no goddam joke! A cop. A crowd. Someone laughs, the baby cries. Near the baby there is a package containing clothes, talcum powder, two cloth dolls and a note scrawled in pencil. Powell (weight 230, complexion pasty, mustache waxed, cane malacca, shoes Florsheim, tie Haskell and Haskell) looks guilty, although God knows, he is innocent. What does the note say: "To whoever finds my baby: Please see that he gets a good home. I am a widow and starving. This act is breaking my heart, but this is the best I can do for my baby son. His name was Arthur. Please be good to him. I will pray for you and him every day." Now, isn't that a hell of a thing for a woman to do?

## 4. SIXTH AVENUE

A little scrawny fellow, with hair like John the Baptist and a thin, straggling beard like Christ, dressed in a twelve-dollar, ready-to-wear, gray suit. He wanders aimlessly up and down Sixth Avenue from 14th Street up to 42nd Street and back again. Torn shoes, shabby trousers, a wild look in his eyes. Nobody knows where he comes from. Six million people come and go, rush, shout, trample, push. Skyscrapers, subways, taxis, clang clang; tear, push, claw, fight. Job, money; money, job. Clerk ends all over loss of job. Nerves gone, job gone. Nuts, screw loose, bats in the belfry; look out, the monkeys'll get yuh. Crazy, crazy as a bedbug. Money gone, nerves shattered. You see, it's this way, the patient is confronted with some situation he cannot face and so, in desperation he takes refuge in a world of unreality. Split personality. Schizophrenia. In the paranoid state, we observe long periods of delusions of persecution and grandeur. I'm Napoleon, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln. Sorry, I can't sell you the Empire State Building today. Sometimes the patient also experiences hallucinations of hearing. Come near, ye nations to hear; and hearken ye people. Let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. Up and down Sixth Avenue he walks, shaking his fists at the skyscrapers, shouting above the roar of the Elevated. Nerves gone, job gone. Clang clang, tear, push, claw, fight. Fantastic delusions of grandeur. I'm Isaiah. For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury is upon all their armies. He has utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. And so in desperation he takes refuge in a world of unreality. Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. Nerves gone, job gone. The little fellow with the straggling beard like Christ, walks down the Avenue, his broken shoes flapping on the sidewalk, his coat flying in the autumn wind. Passersby stare at him and then smile. Nerves gone, job gone. He shouts into the wind, the elevated roars overhead. Liars. Thieves. Hypocrites. He shakes his finger warningly, solemnly. Ye shall flee before the wrath of the Lord. A woman flees into the doorway of a store. They that were brought up in scarlet shall embrace the dunghill. The patient is confronted with some situation he cannot face. Nerves gone, job gone, bats in the belfry, nuts; look out, the monkeys'll get yuh. Behold, I will do a new thing. I will even make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. Job gone. Gone.



**HARRY ALAN POTAMKIN**

# MOVIES AND REVOLUTION

*Comrades of 1918*, a sensitive and intense motion picture of men marshalled, maimed, and murdered in war, never heroic, was G. W. Pabst's entrance into the film of speech and sound. Heretofore he had been a cult of the effete, with peripheral, polished "case studies" in "phobias" and "complexes." That was his Viennese, petty-bourgeois development. The intensifying class-struggle, forcing intellectuals of sensitiveness beyond indulgence and "beyond desire," impressed itself into the consciousness of Pabst. He had seen, at that acute moment, Dreyer's *Joan of Arc*, and had defended that profound film against his own cultists' objections. This middle-class fear of maximum, its own maximum, is a phenomenon that exposes the retrogression of that class, vitiated but tenacious. At that moment too came a new sensory element into the cinema and that was encouragement and a fresh opportunity. His conscience stirred, Pabst's talents have realized themselves in a consistent growth from the pacifist war-film through the majestic *Die Dreigroschenoper* to *Kameradschaft*.

In 1906 French miners were entombed at Courrières on the Franco-German border. The Germans came to their rescue. That event of class-solidarity is the core of *Comradeship*. But with correct insight into the political import of the event, Pabst and his scenarist Vajda project the occurrence into post-war Europe, 1919 . . . A fire has been raging in the French sector of the mine. French Courrières is encased in the ominousness of that fire . . . Three German miners visit a café in the French town. One of them asks a girl for a dance. She refuses. He says the Germans are as good dancers as the French. Threatening faces collect. The Germans leave. "Why did you refuse to dance with him?" asks the girl's sweetheart. "I'm tired," she answers . . . Into the French sector the miners go, also the fire-fighters. The girl leaves for Paris; she cannot endure the doom immanent village . . . A grandfather fearfully escorts little Georges to his first decent into the dragon's mouth . . . The mine caves in. The girl leaps from the train at the next village, returns to her home. Her brother and lover are among the fire-fighters. The village assails the mine-gates.

In the German sector, men are going off-shift. A nucleus decides to go to the aid of the French miners. Some of the Germans are hostile to the idea, remembering 1918, thinking of their own families. But the nucleus is magnetic. It asks the management for the rescue-equipment. The free hours are given to comradeship.

In motor-trucks the rescuers depart. They cannot wait for passports and visas; they cannot stop to explain at the frontiers. They rush through the arbitrary border-line; a too-dutiful flunkey shoots. The symbol is real. However, the German management has advised the French of the departure of the rescuers; the frontier-guard is told. "Thank you for your kindness," says the French operator. "Not at all," replies the German. The risks of capital . . .

Meanwhile the three German buddies of the escapade in the French cafe have gone on-shift. Their leading spirit, who recalls that in the war the mine was a road into the French territory, rushes to the mine-wall where "the frontier goes 800 meters down." His companions follow him. They hack their way into the French sector. They come upon the grandfather who has found his Georges after an anguished search. The seams have broken. Water floods in. The men hack their way into the engine-room and stables. Entombment threatens them there. But they are rescued by a telephone ring . . .

The rescue is done directorially with a fidelity to fact and with a devotion to the human content of the episode and thereby achieves an importance greater than the single incident. Pabst has said this film is "ethical." Its artistry is the complete submission of the technique—camera, set, lighting—and almost complete submission of the acting to this "ethical" intention. No longer is Pabst smooth-finishing surfaces, calling the ambiguous subtle or playing Jack Horner. The denouement of the film, when the Germans have been released from the hospital, is poignant and

hopeful. At the frontier the French fire-fighter, the girl's brother, says "We workers are one! and our enemies we have in common; Gas and War!" The German who was refused the dance embraces the girl. A German rescuer speaks: I have not understood the French comrade's words, but their meaning I have felt.

And here we ask for a further declaration. We ask, indeed, that the entire film be pitched to a completer attack, that its explicit condemnation of national barriers, cleavage of working-class unity, and its urging to unity be pointed to a sharp statement as to who is the enemy, who really is this Gas-and-War. Yet we should be naive or sectarian critics indeed did we not recognize this film as a maximum within the present network of film-control. And what has made this maximum possible? First, the high level of the revolutionary movement in Germany. Second the producing company, Nero, is not within the dominant sphere of action centered in the U.F.A. of Hugenberg, the Nationalist leader. Third, a director of social conscience, responsive, in measure, to the first determinant, was in charge of the operations. It is worth mentioning that his scenarist has been previously accustomed to intrigues like those of Molnar, the Buda pest. Change the determinants and you change the determination. It is also worth considering whether Pabst will hold out or be sustained at the level of *Comradeship*. He has since made *L'Atlantide*, based on the hokum-novel by Pierre Benoit, the French Rider Haggard, and has been recruited to do *Don Quixote* in England. We might anticipate the latter were we not suspicious of Chaliapin as the Spanish windmill-warrior—will we have the grand satire of Cervantes or merely an upholstered opera?

To us here, *Comradeship* places again the question: is it possible to create a proletarian cinema in capitalist America? It is true that of all the media, excepting the radio, the movie is the severest in its resistance. This is due to the nature of the film, the complications involved in making pictures, the expense of making films and the monopoly vested in Hollywood, Hays and Wall Street. Yet, recognizing the severity of the resistance, we know, not solely by an instance like *Comradeship* which is, after all not quite the American case, but by our own evidences mainly, that resistance can be overcome. The Workers' Film and Photo League now extends to several cities; audiences have been established through workers' clubs and mass movie-meetings; the Soviet films have created a critically receptive body of spectators. Slowly but with increasing assurance the movie-makers of the Workers' Film and Photo League have been improving the sense of selection and their skill in the documentations they have made. The record by the Los Angeles section of this League, of the "Free Mooney" run across the Olympic stadium is one of the finest of dramatic newsreel-clips I have seen. Such data will never appear in the commercial release.

The sense of selection has still to be educated in the political references of an image and its combination with other images. Certain bad influences or wrong readings from, respectively, the American newsreel or the Soviet kino have to be yielded. And, of course, constant training in technology and its application is essential. Yet, in these first efforts of the Workers' Film and Photo League there is the one potential source for an authentic American cinema. Other groups, amateur or "independent," are frivolous or merely nominal. The League is motivated within the strongest contemporary force, the revolutionary working-class, is self-critical, eager and, as a unit, suspicious of egotisms. The time is perhaps a long way off when it can produce enacted dramatic films. The German proletarian film-makers ventured into such enterprises and issued either a duplicate of the simplistic "strasse" film or lugubrious episodic linkages of a period when the German proletariat were more "pathetic" than proud, a period exemplified in the graphic art by Zille. When our comrades of the League are prepared for the dramatic re-enactment, a film like *Kameradschaft* will not be a bad pattern. But even now, in this period of the record, the Pabst film is instructive: it is a record a restoration that achieves partial revelation.

CHARLES R. WALKER and PAUL PETERS

# GET THAT BONUS

(This is an excerpt from a play to be produced by The Theatre Union. The date will be announced in the press).

**SCENE 3:** (Inside a boxcar near Washington. Night. The men are haggard and exhausted. Some sleep fitfully propped against the sides. Others lean, sit, or sprawl on a few empty boxes. On a nail near the door hangs a railroad lantern. Beside it is a placard: *Washington Or Bust*. A few vets sing. Almost immediately the train whistles a sharp blast; the singing stops; and Specs, Mitch, Tex, Bill, Swede, and Stankevitch—the vets organized for the march in the first scene in Hooverville at Gary, Indiana—peer out of the door).

**Vets:** (Singing)

And when we get to Washington,  
We'll put Herb Hoover on the run,  
Hinkey dinky parley—

(Sharp engine whistle. Singing stops as Specs cries:)

**Specs:** The train's slowing down. (The men look out the door)

**Mitch:** Somebody's flagging it with lanterns.

**Tex:** Look at them boys hop on. Regular professionals.

**Bill:** You think they're vets?

**Swede:** Four—that makes five of them.

**Mitch:** (After a little pause) They look like bulls to me. (The vets in the car sit up, look anxious).

**Stankevitch:** Everywhere we go, cops and bulls. "Move on, you bums. Shake 'em legs. No got room here for you." They talk different when we come back from war.

**Bill:** (Leaning out) They're coming this way over the top.

**Mitch:** Close the door, Swede. Careful with that outside latch. (The door is almost closed) Put this lantern in the corner and turn it down. (It grows dim in the car. Tense pause)

**Specs:** (In an outburst of whining) God Almighty! I'm wore out. Ain't we never going to get there?

**Swede:** Shut up, you soda jerker.

**Mitch:** We can't be far away now.

**Bill:** If anything happens, Mutt, hang on to mama and me. You all right, Marge?

**Marge:** Don't worry so much, Bill. They can't do anything but put us off.

**Mitch:** We ain't getting off.

**Lumberjack:** (A sullen, dark man, heavy-set) I never seen a railroad bull that didn't have poison in him, and I've seen plenty all over the west. They ought to be scotched like rattlesnakes.

**Bud:** Leave them to me, fellows. I'll give them a line. I know the kind of psychology to use on these babies. It's all psychology, see?

**Mitch:** Look out. Here they are. (Noise above. Rapping on upper door. Silence in the car)

**Bull:** Open the door. (No answer. Pause)

**Bull:** Come on, open that god-damn door. We know you're in there. (Bud opens the door. The Bull swings down from the roof of the car)

**Bud:** Sure, come in, officer. We didn't hear you at first. Come right in. Lots of room for everybody. (The Bull turns his flashlight on him; snorts; then sweeps the circle of light around the car)

**Bull:** Turn up that light (Light in the car) My God, looks like a hobo convention. Sitting perty, huh? Where'd you get that lantern?

**Tex:** Bought it.

**Bull:** Yeah? (He strides across, takes it, examines it) Looks like a railroad lantern to me.

**Mitch:** I got it. I'm a railroad man.

**Bull:** What have you done on the road besides riding the rods?

**Bud:** Listen to me a minute, will you, buddy? You got us sized up all wrong. You've surely heard about the Bonus Expeditionary Forces. You see, we aint—

**Bull:** (Snapping him off) I know all about you. Where you got on and where you're getting off.

**Bill:** They told us we could ride this train to Washington.

**Bull:** Well, I'm telling you to pull your junk together and get ready to beat it. We're going to stop at this water tank down here for just two minutes. And in that time everybody's getting off. (Growls from the men)

**Lumberjack:** (Muttering) God damn snake in the grass. (The Bull turns and glowers at them)

**Bud:** Just where's this water tank at, officer?

**Bull:** D. C. line.

**Bud:** How far's that from Washington?

**Bud:** (Cheerfully) (To the Bull) Hell, that's nothing. We'll walk it, boys. All right, major, it's all settled. Everybody's getting off at the water tank. (Growls from the men)

**Bill:** Can't walk fifteen miles with Marge and the kid.

**Bud:** (With a placating gesture) We'll get a truck or something, Bill.

**Bull:** You'll get a hot reception when you get there, I'm telling you. Hoover's got the soldiers lined up waiting for you.

**Stankevitch:** You know, bullman, we come long, long way. Ride three day, no got bed for sleep. Ride nother day, no got god-damn thing to eat. I work all my life in coal mine, never fight, never make complain. Then bossman come, say: "No job, Mike." Sheriffman come, say: "No house, Mike." Policeman come to say: "No bums here." (He leans forward, face to face with the Bull as he says slowly and bitterly) You know—that make hungry man feel like fight when he told all time: "Get off. Get out. Shut up. Move on."

**Bull:** (Staring back at him insolently) Yeah? Well, we'll argue about that when the train stops, Hunky. (He unbuttons his coat, pulls out a gun, twirls it casually on a finger, and places it conveniently in a coat pocket. Swede, with his jaw grimset, rises and comes slowly toward him)

**Swede:** I think before that I throw you off. (The bull squares off to meet him, hand in pocket. For a moment a fight seems inevitable. Everybody stiffens up).

**Lumberjack:** (Horse with emotion) Go on. Knock hell out of him.

**Bud:** (Coming forward to halt the Swede) For the love of Pete, Swede, lay off the rough stuff. You're forgetting there's a woman with us. We don't want no trouble. It will queer us on the bonus. (Ozie slips down over the top of the car)

**Ozie:** (Excited) Listen, folks. There's a bull back yonder big as a barn, trying to throw that Michigan gang off. Roy says to tell you boys stick tight when she stops. They're going to ride this train into Washington if they got to capture the engine. (Stir and murmur among the men)

**Bull:** Come here, Black Boy.

**Ozie:** (Turning, startled, sees the Bull) Me?

**Bull:** Yes, you! (Ozie shuffles up to him, on his guard)

**Bull:** Where you from?

**Ozie:** I'm from hyar.

**Bull:** (To the vets) This nigger riding with you?

**Bud:** Oh, he's been hanging around, officer. You see it's this way—

**Mitch:** He's been with us all the way from Gary.

**Bull:** What was you doing up in that Michigan car?

**Ozie:** Oh, I was just talking to them.

**Bull:** Talking to them, huh? Don't you know that bunch is all Reds?

**Ozie:** No, sir. I don't know nothing about them. They was fine to me.

**Bull:** Well, that aint no healthy place for niggers. Keep away from them. That goes for all of you. Them Reds aint doing nobody any good.

**Bud:** (Picking up his ears) That's Roy's gang aint it?

**Marge:** I don't believe him.

**Lumberjack:** All them bulls is liars.

**Bull:** (Snarling around on him) You shoot your trap off too damn much.

**Mitch:** I was back there talking to them too. They sound all right to me. They got fight in them, that bunch has.

**Bull:** Who's the big muck-a-muck in this gang? (*Roy comes over the top. The men are circled about the Bull and do not see him*)

**Bud:** I am.

**Bull:** Well, you're in the South now, Napoleon, understand? We don't savvee fresh niggers riding around with white women. Take my advice and get this coon out of here.

**Ozie:** I aint hurt nobody

**Mitch:** Ozie's all right.

**A Vet:** Yeah, but it aint wise.

**Marge:** He got more food for us than anybody.

**Bud:** All right, all right, fellows. Let me handle it. I've been thinking about you, Ozie, all the way down. Now we aint got anything against you personally, see? But we're going into Washington now to get our bonus and we got to make a good impression. Black and white don't mix. It don't look right. All the colored fellows are riding that gondola in the back. If I was you, I'd join them.

**Roy:** (*By now having reached the front of the circle*) He's a vet, isn't he? He's got a right to stay here the same as you.

**Bull:** (*Turning on him*) Where'd you come from?

**Roy:** (*To the vets*) Fellows, don't let these bulls tell you what to do.

**Bud:** You keep out of this. We don't want no trouble like you Bolsheviks.

**Bill:** Roy, he's telling us your gang's all Reds.

**Roy:** Our gang's all vets, Bill.

**Bull:** To hell you say. That Michigan bunch is Communists! (*A murmur among the men. Just then the engine whistles a long, hoarse blast*)

**Specs:** (*Shouting*) The train's stopping! The train's stopping!

**Bull:** All right, you bums! Make it snappy now. (*He stumbles over something on the floor, kicks it*) Who belongs to this?

**Specs:** That's my satchel.

**Bull:** Well, tie it on your tail so you don't lose it. (*Giving Tex a shove*). Get off, you!

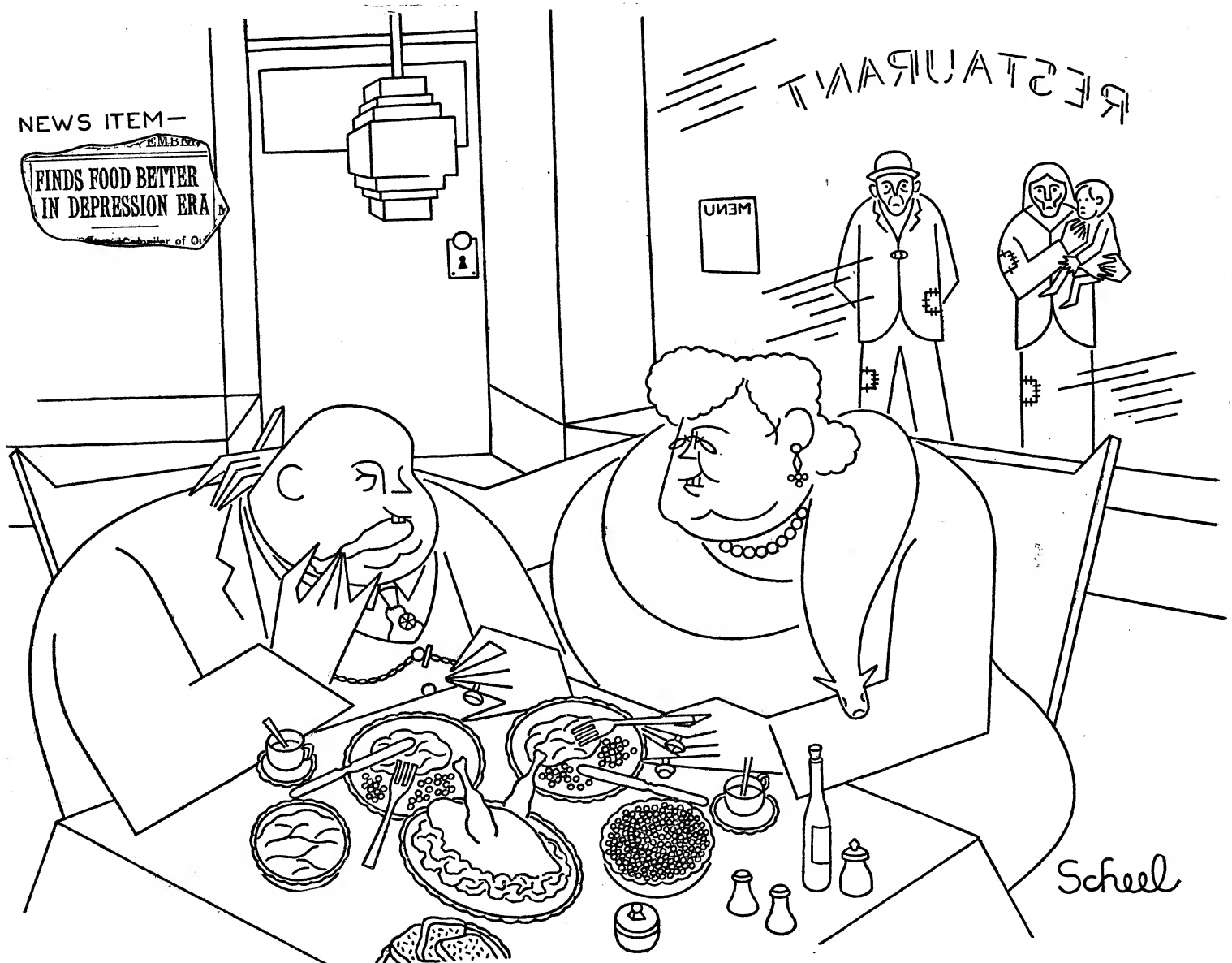
**Tex:** Hey quit poking me. I aint no steer.

**Roy:** (*Raising his voice*) Don't move vets. The trains going to start up in a minute. It'll take us all to Washington.

**Bull:** (*Getting angrier all the time*) I don't want no funny business, now. I got orders to clear this train and by God I'm going to do it. (*Jerking Marge's arm roughly*) Come on, woman. You aint no exception.

**Bill:** Now wait a minute; that's my wife.

**Bull:** (*Sneering*) Your wife, huh? Well, what's she doing in a box-car full of bums?



## GRANVILLE HICKS

## JOHN REED

Critics know well enough that there has been a consecutive tradition of criticism and radical writing in this country and fully recognize their direct and indirect obligation to the men who in the last ten or fifteen years knew about Marx and kept talking about him and finally brought some of us around to the point of finding out what it was all about.

But it is chiefly with the intellectuals who have recently moved over to the revolutionary movement that I am concerned with this evening. The subject suggested for me was *John Reed and the recent leftward trend among the intellectuals*. As I try to think on this topic I find it extremely difficult to find any close connection between John Reed and the writers and artists who in the last two or three years have gone left. Many of the earlier generation of writers knew Reed personally and were influenced by his personality and owed a debt to him, but for this generation of writers and artists there is not that kind of personal obligation and in a way there can be no intellectual obligation because Reed was not a theoretician. But there is nevertheless a very definite tie between John Reed and the group of writers of whom I am

*Marge:* The B. & O. forgot to send my private car around.

*Bull:* (*Turning away*) Well, she can get a move on like everybody else. I don't see where she's crippled. (*Swede takes an empty box and sits down in the middle of the car*)

*Swede:* (*Deliberately*) I think Swede stay right here.

*Tex:* Yeah. I reckon I'm just too damn tired to move. (*He sits down on the floor*)

*Mitch:* We're all staying.

*Vets:* Damn right. You bet we're staying. (*They all sit down again on boxes on floor*) (*Just then the engine-whistle blows engine*)

*Specs:* (*Excited*) The train's moving, fellows! The train's moving!  
*Roy:* Sit tight, men. Don't budge.

*Mitch:* It's the last lap, boys. We're going into Washington.

*Tex:* Yippee! (*Everybody lets up a long triumphant roar. This makes the Bull snorting mad. He rushes up and down the car, yelling, battering the men around, blind with rage*)

*Bull:* Come on, come on. Stand up! Get up there, you! (*Near the door his eyes alight on Ozie*) Come here, nigger. You're going to be the first. (*Ozie dodges quickly out of his way*)

*Ozie:* Umn-umn! You aint going to throw me off. (*The Swede suddenly seizes the Bull from behind*)

*Marge:* Good for you, Swede. Beat him up. Go on, beat him up. (*The Bull swings around and strikes the Swede in the face, knocking him against the side of the car. The Swede grunts. The Bull backs into the doorway and pulls his gun*)

*Lumberjack:* (*With tense hatred*) What's the matter, doughboys? Afraid to pitch this bastard out? (*Mitch, Swede, and the Lumberjack rush the Bull*)

*Bull:* Get back. God damn you, I'll shoot, I tell you. (*The three men pause before the gun. Then the Lumberjack makes a flying leap. A shot is fired. The Bull turns and springs from the train. Everybody stampedes for the corners of the box-car. The Lumberjack remains alone in the doorway. Suddenly he pitches headlong on his face*)

*Bill:* (*Crying out in alarm*) Marge! Where are you, Marge?

*Marge:* I'm here, Bill.

(*The men creep forward with the lantern. They turn the Lumberjack on his face. Mitch and Roy examine him*)

*Mitch:* (*After a long pause*) He's dead, fellows.

*Roy:* What's his name?

*Tex:* He got on at Aberdeen. Didn't say much.

*Bill:* Probably got his discharge in his pocket. (*Roy searches in silence*)

*Roy:* Nope. Not a thing on him.

*Bill:* (*Raising his voice, looking around the car*) Don't anybody know who he is? (*Dead silence*)

*Tex:* Told me he was a lumberjack and aint had work for a couple years.

*Mitch:* I talked to him this afternoon. Said he was wounded in the Argonne. That's all I know. He was a vet who needed his bonus.

speaking. The nature of this relationship was made clear to me only recently when reading Waldo Frank's *Dawn of Russia*. Frank tells how in the interior of Russia he noticed two words printed on the side of a building and he turned to his translator and asked what they were. The answer was "John Reed." Frank said it came over him in a tremendous shock—that the significance of that one man was not merely for Frank himself but for the people the world over—workers and peasants; and Frank says quite naively that he had known Reed somewhat slightly ten years before but was never impressed with him and had never thought about him, but now seeing his name there it suddenly came to him that after all he owed an enormous debt to John Reed. There is a point for each of us in this—the fact that we realize the debt we owe to John Reed. In the past years we have not been conscious of that debt. I doubt if many of us could say that it was the reading of *Ten Days That Shook the World* that turned us leftward. On the contrary we have probably thought of John Reed almost as a myth, a name, and never realized his full significance until now. That significance it seems to me is twofold. Reed has a double importance: He was primarily a journalist—a talented journalist—accepted throughout the country as one of the greatest and keenest men in the profession. Out of his talents as a journalist he gave generously to the revolutionary cause. He wrote for revolutionary papers and as the greatest service of all he left that magnificent piece of reporting, *Ten Days That Shook the World*. But that was not the only contribution. Reed, when the time came, threw himself into the revolutionary struggle. It happened that he was in Russia at the time of the revolution and what he could do then for that cause he did and gave his life for it. We think of Reed then as one who did for the cause all that he was highly trained to do as a journalist and also turned himself over to the services of the cause in any capacity that the leaders could find for him.

The intellectuals who have swung to the left in recent years must, it seems to me, be prepared to do exactly what Reed did. That is their task at the present time—a double task. On the one hand, they can serve this cause in whatever way their talents permit. Some of them as artists, musicians, novelists, etc. There is a magnificent opportunity for all of them in whatever line of artistic endeavor they are prepared for. On the other hand, they must be ready to do whatever work is presented to them now or later for the revolutionary cause. To some extent we have already seen American intellectuals working along both these lines. We have seen in such activities as the committees which went to Kentucky and which have been active in the Scottsboro case and in the work of the League of Professional Groups for Foster and Ford—we have seen American intellectuals doing something that they have rarely done in our history: going out and taking direct part in the political and economic struggles of the day, to which they have been more or less aloof in the past. We have also seen intellectuals of all kinds making whatever progress they could toward the development of a proletarian and revolutionary literature and art.

When one thinks of the amount of work there is to be done, the contribution that the intellectuals are making seems very slight indeed and there is practically very little danger that any one of us will exaggerate what he personally can do. Yet it would be criminal for us to do less than we can do, and primarily the things that we are able to do are the things that it is of real importance should be done.

There is a necessity for the development of Marxian revolutionary criticism. There is need for the development of genuine revolutionary fiction and also need for such committees as the League of Professional Groups for Foster and Ford, whose work I hope has not ceased with the end of the election campaign. The little then, as compared with the great task before us, we can contribute—that little we must to the best of our ability be prepared to do. There may have seemed a time in John Reed's life when he felt that his contribution could be so slight that it was foolish almost to throw himself into the cause and yet he did so. In that cause he found his greatest fulfillment and the final fruition of his talents. And he found, moreover, a great opportunity—such an opportunity that is not likely to come to us—but for what does come to us we must be prepared to give ourselves to the cause as John Reed was prepared for the cause he undertook in 1917.

*From a speech delivered at the John Reed Memorial Meeting, held under the auspices of the John Reed Club at the New School of Social Research, November 25, 1932.*



# BOOKS

## O'FLAHERTY'S "REVOLUTION"

*SKERRET* by Liam O'Flaherty. Ray Long & Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1932. \$2.50.

To a little Irish island called Nara, inhabited by fishermen and farmers, simple folk living a simple life, comes David Skerrett, schoolmaster, in the year 1887. Brutal and dominating, with a will to power, Skerrett and the island priest, Father Moclair, rule the people. The temperament of the schoolmaster is softened by the birth of a son. He begins to love his unattractive wife and to find peace in pious work among the people. His son dies, undoing his relationship to his wife, who later goes insane, and to the priest, who is beginning to resent Skerrett's growing power. Driven by resentment toward the priest, Skerrett turns to the support of Dr. Melia, scientist and philosophic anarchist. The battle for power continues, the priest gradually winning through his function as a front for landowners and the more distant imperialist power. Coleman O'Rourke, the "revolutionist," makes a sporadic attempt to organize the people against the Cess tax and the governmental priest. Father Moclair, fearing Skerrett will join the revolutionary movement at this juncture, openly antagonizes him, and Skerrett goes "revolutionary."

The rebellion dies down and the people become divided among themselves. The priest shamelessly exploits them for himself and the landowners, and rises rapidly into greater power, as Skerrett's influence declines. Dr. Melia disappears but his anarchism remains in Skerrett who is now a reactionary. There is pathos in the priest's triumph over Skerrett in the miserable finale to Skerrett's tortured life.

The story is constructed on the lines of O'Flaherty's customary theme, the futility of labor leadership. The dab of pathos colors the implications and makes a touching yarn. But in the characterization of the peasant struggle against the Cess tax he shows a naive conception of the forces in peasant revolt. One hardly notices in this fiction of Nara any stirring within the people. They appear and grow quite by accident when O'Rourke nabs a soap box as they leave the church. O'Rourke, "revolutionary," is no more than a fanatic actuated by religious and sex maladjustments, by personal antipathies to the priest, and by a sense of the grandeur of personal power, to lead a class struggle! Having set up this dummy, along with Skerrett, another dummy, O'Flaherty proceeds to knock them down, and then to generalize for the world a cynical philosophy.

"Among those who attempt to improve society there are always two groups; revolutionaries and reformers. The latter aim at leading the people toward the desired goal by reasoned and gradual progress. The former try to effect the change by violence, by sneering and an affectation of superiority, which is generally a token of defeated ambition or of some abnormal passion, akin to insanity. Skerrett had begun as a reformer and he was now forced by Moclair's cunning into the other group. And as there is only a thin dividing line between a revolutionary and a reactionary, in face of general popular hostility Skerrett soon became a complete crank, criticising every social activity and custom on the island."

If you assume that O'Flaherty is an intelligent man, you are forced to suspect his sincerity in face of the cold speciousness of his argument. He has yet to put on paper the real nature of a revolutionary. His revolutionaries remain reformers. And perversions of actuality are inescapably evident: he generalizes from his own fictions. Neither O'Rourke nor Skerrett is a leader representing his class. O'Rourke has nothing to say when he faces the people. And Skerrett is a fanatical school master driven to the people by Father Moclair in the fight for bourgeois leadership. As to violence, O'Flaherty pictures a demonstration incited to riot by its own alleged leaders, *after which* the police come in to restore order. Not once borne out in the history of militant labor.

Viewed historically O'Flaherty must take his place in the back-

wash of the sensationalists, the Ibsens and O'Neills who delight in the caprices of strange people; a tendency concomitant with removal from productivity, and associated with leisure psychology. By his interest in the peasantry he becomes a refined sensationalist, and you have his rationalization of that in his twisted social perspective, based on the romance of personality.

Again, the theme of Skerrett develops out of O'Flaherty's life. Believing himself to have been a revolutionary, but precisely because he never was a revolutionary, he finds himself a reactionary. Hopeless and confused, he suddenly appears where perhaps he belongs, in the American Spectator with his latest melancholy wail "—we can once more in Ireland have wine and love and poetry; become a people famed as of old, 'for beauty and amorousness.'" While Ireland plunges deeper into the net of imperialist and capitalist exploitation, and its people is preparing to break the cords, O'Flaherty, putting his finger to his clock, pushes the hand determinedly counter clockwise saying to himself, now tomorrow shall be yesterday.

—JOHN Mc DONALD

## THE FORD MYTH

*THE TRAGEDY OF HENRY FORD*, by Jonathan Norton Leonard. Putnam, New York, 1932. \$3.00.

To describe the life of Henry Ford as a tragedy is an esthetic indecency; certainly the events described in this book do not merit the term by the criterion. As a matter of fact, however, Mr. Leonard makes no attempt to substantiate such a thesis. It's just a title, probably picked by the publisher. Mr. Leonard himself can hardly be said to have a consistent point of view; he doesn't like Ford, but neither does he attack him from any systematic base; in fact, a dim recognition that he has no basic criteria leads him at times to apologetics for Ford; the only time he is jolted into real indignation is when he sees what it means to work for Ford; but the mood does not last. Except for a few pages of good description, the book is scarcely worth reading.

But Mr. Leonard's confusion is worthy of comment. He confesses he began with the feeling that Ford was "the evil genius of twentieth century America"; but then he found that Ford was "in some ways friendly, simple, kindly"; that he did not spend all his time amassing money; that his motives were "often benign and good although certainly not intelligent"; that Ford loves nature; and so on, to the unusual conclusion that "Ford was no worse than Frick or Gary." Thus, Mr. Leonard had begun with a picture Ford as a devil, and ended with the discovery that he was in reality just an American industrial capitalist. A great discovery, indeed!

And so Mr. Leonard feels that Ford should be given credit for trying "to rise above the dubious distinction of mere wealth. He failed, often ludicrously, but at least he tried. Which is more than most rich men do." To such a pass does Mr. Leonard come because he started with an unreal picture of Ford as a sort of devil.

To soften the picture of Ford the exploiter by referring to his love of nature, his friendliness to individuals surrounding him, and his occasional attempts to do other things than run his business, is the equivalent of appealing for votes for a candidate because he is good to his family. The one has nothing to do with the other; socially considered, the objective fact of Ford the exploiter is uninfluenced by his subjective feelings. The once flourishing Ford myth was a compound of such irrelevant subjective items and misrepresented or misunderstood facts, which were in no way inconsistent with the grim reality of Ford's anti-social role. Moreover, we need only to examine these facts to see that attempts to explain them in terms of individual character, as Mr. Leonard tries to do, are, to say the least, inadequate.

Mr. Leonard himself exposes the fact that Ford's pose as the

prophet of high wages was an afterthought. In a period of expanding economy with labor comparatively scarce, the horrible working conditions in Ford's plant brought about a 100 percent labor turnover; Ford solved this major problem by raising wages to a point where the increased efficiency from a stable personnel brought still more profits; when it became profitable to cut wages, Ford quickly forgot his role as prophet of a new era. Another apparently unorthodox element in Ford's make-up, his avowed hatred of Wall Street, was simply the intra-class hatred of the industrial capitalist for the finance capitalist, voiced only more privately by thousands of other manufacturers who, more and more, find themselves dominated by the bankers. If Mr. Leonard knew anything about the significance of the rise of finance capital, this attitude of Ford's would not puzzle him.

Ford's backing of the fantastic peace ship affair in 1916 is partly explainable in personal terms. Only a man as ignorant as he was about the international line-up could have participated in that mad jaunt, which played into the hands of the jingoes and still further weakened the feeble attempts of others to stave off the war. But the social rationale of Ford's temporary pacifism is clear enough. Especially in 1916, Ford was not the characteristic product of twentieth century capitalism; his scale of operations was larger than that of the early nineteenth century capitalist, but the change was still quantitative: his mental outlook was that characteristic of the latter, of the industrial capitalist not primarily dependent on foreign markets; war meant the destruction of valuable materials and manpower. But as soon as war became imminent Ford went with his class. And the war taught him that the social destruction of materials and men meant more millions for himself. He had announced that profits on his 50 percent of the stock would be returned to the government, but he never turned back a penny. Once he was a munitions maker, Ford's expressed attitude toward war was that another world war was coming anyway, and that "what America should do is to jump quickly and beat them all."

Ford's "sociological department" experiment has been sufficiently exposed for what it really was; it was in effect a method of standardizing and supervising the lives of his employees in order to get more work out of them in the factory.

Of such things, plus an efficient publicity staff and the more than willing cooperation of the capitalist press, was the Ford myth compounded.

Ford today is definitely on the downgrade. Three cars—Chrysler's Plymouth, the Chevrolet Six and the Essex Terraplane—sell for equal or less money and are far superior to his in every way. The automobile industry, hopelessly overbuilt, joins coal and textiles as a permanently sick industry. Moreover, the day of the entrepreneur is over; Ford's one-man direction of his plant, under the conditions of the crisis, has resulted in an amazing collapse of morale in the personnel, paralleled by technical demoralization. It is already clear that, despite his considerable resources, his railroad, ships, mines and steel mills, Ford will eventually have a session with the bankers and submit to the domination of finance capital.

Needless to say, the agonies of this transition are primarily agonies of the workers of the Ford plants. Mr. Leonard who has in a few pages described their terrific toil, forgets about it as he closes his book, twanging an elegiac lyre over Ford's vulnerability. That elegiac note is repulsive; for Ford's fight to keep clear of the bankers is waged on the backs of the workers. They pay its cost in speed-ups which are incredible unless they have been seen, and in wage-cuts which have now brought their pay down to \$4 a day—when they work. When I was in Dearborn in September 15,000 out of 120,000 were working three days a week, the plant had just opened after a two-months shut down, and would soon be shut down again. And when a man works two days, the foremen squeeze six days' strength out of him. When he doesn't work, the only relief he gets is Detroit's soup kitchens for himself and his family. Mr. Leonard's elegiac note about Ford's rise and decline doesn't fit in with my memories of Detroit during the week of the Ford massacre. Ford may be declining, but he is still strong enough to kill workers by overwork and bullets. I should like to see a really significant biography of Ford; one dedicated to the memory of our four murdered comrades who lie in their common grave facing the Ford factories: Joe York, George Bussell, Coleman Leny, Joe de Blasio.

—FELIX MORROW

## Ripe for Revolution

Ministers plenipotentiary pecking out a column of book chat daily and weekly for advertisers and reading clubs found themselves recently in an uncomfortable position. Edward Dahlberg's new novel of American life had appeared.\* However, they rose to the occasion and, with two or three notable exceptions, threw dust in their readers' eyes. It did not matter what the excuse was just as long as it was an excuse.

The trouble, it seems, was that here had been written a book about people undeniably similar to the majority of readers of their columns. Dahlberg's story of their lives was far from flattering. Hence the throwing of dust in everyone's eyes. Dahlberg doesn't know how to write; Dahlberg doesn't know what people want to read about; Dahlberg isn't nice company; Dahlberg makes things appear worse than they actually are. If these men who make a business of filling a column or two reading matter next to advertisements had fulfilled the functions of a critic, they would have hastened to report that Dahlberg's people chew gum and rent books at the lending library like fifty million other Americans.

*From Flushing to Calvary* is the story of Lorry Lewis. He had once been in a Cleveland orphanage, but when the story opens he is living with his mother, Lizzie, in Bensonhurst. Bensonhurst, Dahlberg tells us, is low, flat, rheumatic marshland studded with ash-stucco houses shaped like Camel cigarette boxes. It is one of those real estate developments in every suburb that are created without plan and inhabited without reason. It is in this section of New York, on Long Island, that we find Lorry working as a shipping clerk. His mother is trying to make some money. At the moment, she is getting a few dollars by trimming corns and digging bunions. But that is only a side-line, or rather one of many side-lines. The answering of matrimonial ads is, perhaps, the most important to her of several interests.

One evening Lizzie meets a fellow named Jerry Calefonia. Jerry, who runs a bicycle repair shop, picks her up. He doesn't like Lizzie so well after he gets to the house, but he stays a while just the same. Jerry had said over and over to himself: "Cheap peoples live here." He was speaking of America in general and of Bensonhurst in particular, as well as of Lizzie's mean street. He wished to go back home, to his own country, but in the meantime he picked up Lorry's mother. The story has broken into a run by this time.

Lizzie isn't getting on so well with her side-lines as she had hoped. She takes in a boarder at four dollars a week. That helps, but not enough, and she begins borrowing money from him. Lizzie has remembered that back in Kansas City, where she had been a lady barber, she used to make money on the side with an Indian remedy. She secures a customer, and guarantees to bring about an abortion. One or two others come to her for help after that, and the money begins coming in. She goes out and tries to drum up trade. After a while the income from this source begins to peter out, and Lorry loses his job.

By this time a matrimonial ad has brought in Hervey to her. Hervey isn't sure if he wishes to marry her. He stalls. Lizzie wishes first to find out how much money he has, and whether he will sign over half of his property to her. They fight over her demands. Lorry sits on his bed in the next room and listens to them argue. He wishes to help his mother, but he doesn't know what to do.

The story has gathered a powerful momentum by this time. Dahlberg is writing calmly but we are dry-mouthed with excitement. We know nothing is going to happen, not much out of the ordinary, anyway; but we wish to go on with Lorry and Lizzie at an increased tempo, trying in a way to push them out of the mess. But Dahlberg holds us back and forces us to examine the evidence more closely. There's nothing to get excited about, he says; these people can't do a thing with themselves, not because they are incapable of direct action but because they do not know what can be done with their lives. They are the products of a native environment that most of us have struggled against, and lost. Everybody, in the story will lose in the end, just as we have done so far. Lorry and Lizzie have no contact with growth, either social or economic; they are in the backwash of America. He does not tell us that we all could get out of the slums and into clean

\*FROM FLUSHING TO CALVARY, by Edward Dahlberg. Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1932. \$2.50.

rooms; out of the life-sapping routine of weary job-hunting and into a factory with decent pay—Dahlberg doesn't tell us that, but he knew and we know that we'll continue looking for jobs where there are no jobs and pinching pennies until there is no penny left until the the gut-rotting disorganization of unplanned society is thrown bag-and-baggage overboard.

All this stench of Bensonhurst will continue to sweep into the nostrils of men until our system of life is changed. Only a complete reorganization can erase the mean streets, the packing-box flats, the hamburger-and-coffee meals, the body-crushing existence of four-fifths of America. Lorry didn't know what to do about it; he did not even realize that anything could be done about it. He was caught in the backwash. Lorry and Lizzie had grown up in pre-1930 America, and they did not know the world was changing. One cause lies there.

It is at this point in the narrative that we as readers become fully convinced that Lorry and Lizzie will continue their degraded existence until some means are devised to furnish them with direction and leadership out of the slough of capitalism that had defeated them. If a man be ignorant, then teach him; do not damn him for his ignorance. There is not a person in this tale who would not be capable of becoming revolutionary if only he knew how to go about it, or had someone to direct him. The incentive to rise needs only a single spark to set a man free, but the spark has yet to come into contact with millions.

This is not a proletarian novel. Before such a book can be written there must first be a revolutionary change of life in America. We cannot expect to write or to read genuinely proletarian novels until we live in a proletarian world. At our present stage, we find that we can only begin where our previous existence dumped us. We were dumped by a capitalist system on hard ground, and here we lie. Our first step is now being taken; we are scattered, broken, and bewildered; we are lifting our heads and looking ahead into the future. *From Flushing To Calvary* is the hard ground, the working-model from which we hope to get away. There is use, then, in such a book. Without such books we would not know our materials.

This is the kind of story of which revolutionary literature is made. This is the beginning, the initial step. Here are the people; this is the environment. With this we know we cannot continue to live. This is the clay for the mold. The next step is that of contact and teaching. Dahlberg's people are ripe for revolution.

Men who throw dust in readers' eyes are not the only enemies of Communism. Some few reviewers carefully forgot to read this book, or, having read it, forgot to write about it; but the greatest menace has almost come unnoticed. There are those who have elbowed their way into what they consider the inner circle of revolutionary activity. They write glowingly of "Communism" for their magazines and papers, gush about it over speakeasy glasses, and await the time when they think they will take "Communism" away from the worker and make it respectable for themselves. There is a menace in this, and Dahlberg's book was eagerly grabbed to work upon. The sooner these bogus "Communists" are kicked back to where they breed, the better will revolutionary activity proceed. Men who edit magazines and papers read largely by bondholders and stockowners can easily reach out the back door and shake hands with a worker, but it is not so easy to go out the front door and walk down the street arm in arm with the same man. Workers are not interested in whether an investor's bonds are defaulted; a worker must have a job and food and shelter. He will gain none of these by holding on to the coat tails of some literary racketeer who is out to make "Communism" fashionable.

Dahlberg's people lift their voices and sing, "America, you've made us what we are today." There is no quarter given, no feeble excuse offered; the fact that Lorry and Lizzie and Jerry and Hervey are what they are, is sufficient reason to indict the environment in which they were forced to exist. It is an unhealthy, squalid, painful environment imposed upon America by the barons of coal and steel, wheat and cotton.

Although *From Flushing To Calvary* attempts to cover too much territory, and the over-ambitious plan of the novel does jerk us from coast to coast with too much speed, the successful study of Lorrie and Lizzie is so overwhelmingly accurate that such criticism seems insignificant in retrospect.

ERSKINE CALDWELL

## LINE OF DESCENT

*INHERITANCE*, by Phyllis Bentley. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$2.50.

Two contemporary English novelists have impressed themselves as points of departure for the novel of class-character: D. H. Lawrence and John Galsworthy. The former, in *Sons and Lovers* and *Women in Love*, set an evil example for writers from the proletariat. This example splits the attitude of even so class-conscious a writer as Harold Heslop in *The Gate of a Strange Field*, and blurs the mind's eye of F. C. Boden in *Miner*. The influence of Galsworthy is felt not in the novel stemming from the "common people"—this populist term is still a favorite with the English—but in that rooted in the hard stratum of the middle-class, a stratum which is today disintegrating.

Miss Bentley's novel *Inheritance* is of the chronicle-linkage type made proper by Galsworthy in *The Forsyte Saga*. "Saga" is not quite a correct picture of this even-tempered sequence of overlapping generations: it is not brave enough, does not encompass enough, it is within the proprieties of an unheroic class. Its line is that of descent, its structure the continuity of a genealogical tree. Miss Bentley in her work duplicates one of Galsworthy's relationships, a relationship conventional in the acceptations of "the social novel." The off-shoot of two branches of the same tree, two hostile branches, meet and are mutually enamoured. This is a tremendous complication to Galsworthy, somewhat less so to Miss Bentley, both of whom are symptomatic of the same stratum, if of different vertical segments of that stratum. It is in this difference that a critic should find Miss Bentley's special value. She is a warmer chronicler than Galsworthy, whose people are most often interesting players skilled in the technology of performance, but seldom vital, almost never related to anything beyond themselves, their mutton and their estates. This may be an accurate enough diagram, but the author is creator and should force this appearance of isolation into its true meaning, its identification with the social currents. But Galsworthy is "above the battle"—even when he is aroused; he sympathizes with the offended but builds a wall around his own estate: he is a gentleman.

Miss Bentley is obliged by the pressure of her material to see a relationship. She starts in that period of the textile-trade which earlier English novelists have treated, Jane Bronte in *Shirley* and Charles Reade in *Put Yourself in His Place*, the period of the Luddite machine-wreckers, the Ten Hours Bill and the Chartists—into the era of Unionism. Like her predecessors, Miss Bentley views the affray from the viewpoint of the man-on-top, and as the background and greensward for love and domesticity. She is kindly, certainly more than Reade—who could not see the forest, (principle) for the trees, (destruction)—and more so than Bronte, who was less bitter than Reade the samaritan. But the two wrote their novels closer upon the first flame and smoke of the individual revolution. Miss Bentley has the vantage-point of the 1930s. It is true she draws a clearer and more dramatic picture of the Luddites, their "twisting" and their betrayal, than she draws of the Trade-Unionists, her own contemporaries. Yet she does not draw the picture of the struggle in its declared and trenchant significance. To her the importance does not lie in the struggle at all, but in the persons, principally the owners, whom she sees almost always as handsome or beautiful of physical aspect. These persons glow more invitingly than do Galsworthy's but one suspects the coloration is not their own, rather the light that Miss Bentley's candles throw upon them.

The best picture of the author's class-viewpoint may be found in the repetition of one motif: the suction of daughters of operatives into the operator-class, through marriage based on seduction. Shall we call this the democratization of dynasty? Perhaps it is not wholly untrue factually. Yet it is a romantic version of class-collaboration, which, we are not surprised to find, is the culmination of the 'saga'. For all her demeanor of neutrality, Miss Bentley has her axe to grind. She says, through the musings of Oldroyd, the latest twig on the family-tree, speaking almost in parable of what she does not call the capitalistic crisis: "... All

human conflicts happened because people didn't understand one another; they didn't explain things to each other; they didn't interpret . . . there was no excuse for quarrels; all that old conflict nonsense must be thrown aside, they must arrange things in a new way altogether, there must be a new synthesis." She does not say that the synthesis is achieved solely through the antithetic assertion of the working-class, but by "men skilled in compassion and life-development" (a suggestion borrowed from Thomas Hardy). Actually this means the same as a dictatorship of "specialists," though its phrasing is more idealistic. This is the sense of the relationship throughout the book and its concentrated expression is in the best human portrait in the novel, that of the bastard Oldroyd, the lame Jonathan Bamforth, child-laborer when a tot, later a member of the Oldroyd household and office, but throughout the greater and richer part of his life a reform-leader. To young David Oldroyd the Bamforth strain, especially its origin in Joe, the reluctant Luddite who gave his life for a murder in which he did not really participate, is the admirable ingredient of the social conscience. "Between the two opposing parties stands Joe Bamforth," thinks Young David, re-living the Oldroyd history, "a man in fair compassions skilled, a man indifferent to his own interest and eager for the welfare of others, a man who understands and loves both parties, a man who might have interpreted them to each other and reconciled them." This approval of the hyphenate coincides with the uprooting of the Oldroyd's crisis. They depart from their traditional soil, but David leaps from the train to return to where Miss Bentley would have us believe he feels he belongs. This is an inconclusive encouragement of middle-class England to start over again. The approval of the hyphenate would persuade the working-class (the Lancashire weavers for instance) to become reconciled with the owners, to forget its struggle and submit to "men of compassion"—who would act in whose interest? *Blessed is the peacemaker for his is the kingdom of the Oldroyds!*

HARRY ALAN POTAMKIN

## Night Over Manchuria

Ai Ai

*Manchuria is a house of slaughter**Chiang Kai-Chek has betrayed China**The brave Nineteenth Route Army is become an old woman**Pu Yi dances to Tokyo's tune*

Ai Ai

*Our fields are destroyed with shells**The bones of our cattle protrude**Our children wail with hunger**When shall the Red Armies come?**I listen all night for the sound of their cannon*

Ai Ai

*Manchuria is a house of slaughter.*

Ai Ai

*This morning I went down to the river**The waters were yellow and swollen**As I stood, the waves washed up a young girl's corpse*

Ai Ai

*When shall the Red Armies come?**I listen all day for the sound of their cannon**I climb the tallest pine to sight the red soldiers.*

Ai Ai

*I look to the ruins before me**The huts yet smoke**The valley is loud with wailing*

Ai Ai

*When shall the Red Armies come?**I run the head of the valley**I listen forever for the sound of their cannon**I await the red soldiers bearing peace.*

A. HAYES

## Hoover Dam Remembered from El Tovar

*The quality of beauty is memory: from the porch  
Of El Tovar, leaning over the bold exigence  
Of Grand Canyon, we thought of that (three black boys  
And a white, bound together with the same thought  
And language: looking at the sky and hunched  
Against the bitter blast of the wind  
At sunset): As the evening froze upon the golden gorge,  
The wind advanced upon the clouds  
From the frontline trenches of the sunset,  
And daylight in the east retreated  
With casualties of clouds, but we remembered  
That the sun was dying many miles  
From Bright Angel Point, over Las Vegas  
And Hoover Dam (the Boulder Canyon Project  
Is built of the blood and brawn of the workers:  
Their bones are mangled to cement for concrete  
And they pave the tunnels with death:  
That is the color of scarlet in the sunset)  
And over the western horizon as the blue  
Of night came up, we remembered how ghastly  
Lavender monoxide gas was vomited  
From the tunnel mouths (in this the workers  
Lived and staggered out of as the shift  
Layed off: that was the cool blue beauty  
After sunset recalled from the porch of El Tovar  
Where the streamers of light were dying in the canyons  
And blood relatives of the men who enslaved  
The workers and executed the funeral rites  
Of their death from accident were given  
To the exhilarating enjoyment of beauty  
While the flags of sunset flashed revolution  
Over the deathly darkness of Boulder Dam.*

NORMAN MACLEOD

## They Are Ours

*Alabama, Alabama,  
You have heard  
The white workers' word;  
Let the sound strike the ground  
Of the South till it cowers:  
These nine—who are black,  
Give them back—they are ours!  
White boss of Alabama,  
Give them back without a hair  
Burned upon the bloody chair,  
Alabama!*

*Scottsboro, Scottsboro,  
To the workers of the earth  
This day you are worth  
Nine boys—  
Hear the voice:  
These nine—who are black,  
They are ours—give them back!  
White powers of the south,  
You shall pay for every sorrow  
That twists a mother's mouth,  
Black mother of these youths,  
Scottsboro!*

*White powers of the North  
These nine, who are black,  
Are brothers of the two  
You cannot give back—  
Two burned in Massachusetts!*

But—

*These nine you can give,  
Southern slut!  
And you shall pay—they shall live!  
By the crime of Massachusetts,  
By the black workers' sorrow,  
Terror for your terror  
We shall bring tomorrow,  
Scottsboro!*

ORRICK JOHNS



## Night Watch in Megalopolis

Eighty stories up, throbbing toward nothingness,  
The senile dream, the anguished rut, the frantic lunge that cannot still  
The gossip of the stripped and laughing stars;  
Eighty stories up, throbbing toward nothingness, see, oh see, the  
slim young moon has slipped  
A silver quarter to the Empire State. . . .

Squeak, squeak, the rat-watch changes, on the parapet  
Eighty stories up, throbbing toward nothingness: "The Parthenon  
Was made to work too. Eheu—" the bitch rat said to the buck rat  
"The Parthenon  
Was made work too. The steps are smooth—  
Two thousand years, still smooth."  
Eighty stories up, throbbing toward nothingness—  
"A job for the jobless, Pericles . . . eheu  
"Robbed a dying Empire's treasury to build  
"A temple to the dying gods, but most to keep  
"Peace in the streets, the mob . . ."

JAMES RORTY.

## All the News That's Fit to Print

"CLEAR ALL WIRES", a comedy by Samuel and Bella Spiwack  
at the Times Square Theatre.

America is developing a new school of journalism exemplified by such newsgatherers as Floyd Gibbons, Lowell Thomas, Larry Rue, etc. The distinguishing characteristic of this new school is that its devotees tell the world how they gathered the news of any particular event, what dangers they underwent, what their personal reactions were, but somehow always forget to speak of what actually happened.

The reason for the ascendancy of Floyd Gibbons and the rest of the rapidly increasing pack of "headline hunters" is obvious. Reports of what is actually happening in and to the capitalist world, no matter how varnished, are becoming daily more damaging to the rulers of society whom newspapers serve. This is so because the facts themselves are becoming daily more damaging. The simple expedient, therefore, is to say nothing about the facts and to center attention on the reporter.

Intentionally, or otherwise, the authors of "Clear All Wires," have written a trenchant satire on the entire Floyd Gibbons school of reporting. The play has additional interest by virtue of its locale, Moscow.

"Clear All Wires" pictures a group of correspondents in Moscow who speak in their dispatches of "the greatest social experiment the world has ever seen" as a sop to the censors, and who are largely preoccupied with petty professional intrigue, promotions, and trips to Paris. This group is dominated by the figure of the beefy, blustering, go-getting newsman who has no scruples about getting people killed to "create" news. He makes public the index to his intellectual caliber by sneering at the only sincere observer-student-reporter:

"You're not a newspaperman. You're an essayist."

Not so unintentionally, perhaps, the authors picture the Russian Communist assistant of the blustering American, as a servile, cringing creature who is completely stripped of his Communist dignity by the sight of American currency. In some cases fairer treatment is accorded to other Russian characters who are only incidental to the chief line of interest in the play. Amusing accuracy goes into the portraits of a declassed weak-minded nobleman and his wife-in-name-only, a one-time member of the Imperial Ballet.

With a new tide of lies rising from Bucharest, Vienna, Prague, and other headwaters of anti-Soviet propaganda in preparation for more serious attacks to come, "Clear All Wires" is of limited usefulness; it gives a superficial insight into the mechanics of international news dissemination.

PHILIP STERLING

## Readers of the NEW MASSES

The document prepared for the Wickersham Commission, but suppressed until now, relating the true facts:

## The Mooney-Billings Report

is available, for the first time in history.

Now is the time to concern yourself vitally with the case and there is no better way of doing it than to first acquaint yourself with the complete and authentic details.

Direct from the publishers or on sale at bookstores

\$ 1.50

GOTHAM HOUSE, Inc.

66 FIFTH AVENUE

NEW YORK CITY

## THE NATIONAL STUDENT LEAGUE

## DANCE

featuring

Archie Abram's

I. W. O. RED HATTERS

FRIDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 23RD

at CENTRAL OPERA HOUSE

67th Street Near Third Ave.

Subscription 50c

## Dauber & Pine Bookshops, Inc.

Sixty-Six Fifth Avenue — New York

Open Until 10 P. M.

OLD, RARE AND USED BOOKS, REASON-  
ABLY PRICED. NEW BOOKS (Except  
Text Books, etc.) at 20% DISCOUNT

MAGNITOGORSK by A. Malenky. Price 10c. Published by the Co-operative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the U. S. S. R. and distributed by International Publishers.

In the black days of the civil war between the Whites and Reds, Lenin visualized a retreat to the Urals and the creation of a Ural Kuznetsk Republic, based on the iron and coal deposits of these regions. Fortunately this proved unnecessary, the invaders and exploiters were defeated and ejected from the country. But the thought remained, the thought of developing this immensely rich region, to harness it and turn it to account in the development of socialism.

A century ago Russia was the foremost producer of pig iron in the world. Today Socialist Russia is rapidly regaining this preeminence. While other countries are shutting down their plants, the Soviet Union is increasing its own works. By 1937 the Soviet Union will be the foremost metal producer.

This is a story of how Kuzbas coal and Ural metal became linked into one combine for the creation of a second line of growth, a second coal and metallurgical base. Around these are being created the chemical by-product industries: fertilizers, liquid fuel, coal tar. Magnitogorsk will yet make the Soviet Union a worthy rival of chemical Germany.

The conditions of work, living conditions, housing conditions, wage scales, cultural levels, the town sanitary conditions, the creches, the kindergartens, the elementary schools; they are all described in detail in the pamphlet.

ROBERT JULIEN KENTON

**Register Now!**  
for the  
**WINTER TERM**  
Jan. 9 to April 1, 1933  
**WORKERS SCHOOL**  
"TRAINING FOR THE CLASS STRUGGLE"

**Classes in:**

Principles of Communism	Movement
Political Economy	History of the Three Internationals
Marxism-Leninism	Youth Problems
Negro Problems	Pioneer Leadership
Colonial Problems	Public Speaking
Trade Union Strategy	Revolutionary Journalism
Organization Principles	English, Russian, Esperanto
History of the American Labor	Revolutionary Theatre

Classes fill up quickly. Don't wait till the last week; avoid disappointment. 1600 students registered for the Fall term. We had 64 classes and 32 instructors. We have enlarged our staff as well as curriculum. But if you are wise you will register *right now*. Get our new Winter Term descriptive catalogue at the

**WORKERS SCHOOL**

35 E. 12th St., New York, 3rd Floor  
Phone Algonquin 4-1199

*Make it a habit to attend*

**THE WORKERS SCHOOL FORUM**

Every Sunday Night

35 E. 12th St., New York, 2nd Floor

PROMINENT SPEAKERS  
Admission 25c

LIVE CURRENT TOPICS  
Questions and Discussion

*The First Socialistic Picture from Germany*

**COMRADESHIP**

*Kameradschaft*

**E U R O P A**  
154 West 55th St.  
East of 7th Ave.

Continuous from 10:30 A.M.  
Circle 7-0129  
25c Until Noon

**STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION,**

ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST, 24, 1912.

OF NEW MASSES, published monthly at New York, N. Y. for Oct. 1, 1932.  
State of New York: County of New York.

Before me, a notary public in and for the State and County aforesaid personally appeared Conrad Komorowski, who having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the managing editor of the New Masses, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 411, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business manager are:

Publisher: New Masses, Inc. 63 West 15 St.; Editor: Robert Evans, 63 West 15 St.; Managing Editor: Conrad Komorowski, 63 West 15 St.; Business Manager: Conrad Komorowski, 63 West 15 St.

2. That the owner is: The American Fund for Public Service, 2 West 13 St., N. Y. C. James Weldon Johnson, Pres., 2 West 13 St., New York City; Rob't W. Dunn, Sec'y, 2 West 13 St., New York City; Morris L. Ernst, Treas., 2 West 13 St., New York City.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgagees, or other securities are: None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner, and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

CONRAD KOMOROWSKI, Business Manager

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 21st day of September, 1932.

Peter K. Hawley, Notary Public

Kings Co. No. 488, Reg. No. 3113

Cert. filed in N. Y. Co. No. 241 Reg. No. 3H100  
(My commission expires March 30, 1933)

**READ****"Soviet Russia Today"**

Authentic news and latest developments on the economic and cultural fronts of the land ruled by the workers and peasants.

An illustrated monthly, describing clearly and truthfully every phase of life under the Soviets.

**ANNOUNCING  
A****3 month Subscription Campaign**

during

**DECEMBER, JANUARY, FEBRUARY**

**SUBSCRIBE NOW**

and receive

A WOOD CUT PRINT of LENIN, STALIN or GORKY  
**ABSOLUTELY FREE**

Subscription \$1.00 for one year

Write for information on other prizes which are being offered.

Address

**SOVIET RUSSIA TODAY**

80 E. 11th Street — Room 330 — New York City

**Subscribe Now for the**

**Daily Worker**  
NEW YORK, N. Y. — U.S.A.

50 EAST 13TH STREET, NEW YORK CITY

ARTICLES and FEATURES by William Z. Foster, James W. Ford, Earl Browder, Robert Dunn, Israel Amter, Michael Gold, Whittaker Chambers, Myra Page, Grace Hutchins and others.

DAILY CARTOON BY JACOB BURCK

NEWS FROM ALL FRONTS OF THE CLASS STRUGGLE

**SUBSCRIBE FOR THE SATURDAY ISSUE**

52 TIMES A YEAR ..... \$1.00

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: One Year \$6; Six Months, \$3.50 Three Months, \$2.00; One Month, 75 Cents.

In Manhattan and Bronx: One Year, \$9; Six Months, \$5; Three Months, \$3; One Month \$1. (Same for Canada and Foreign Countries).

**Combination Offers**

NEW MASSES, twelve issues (\$1.50) and

*To Make My Bread*, by Grace Lumpkin (\$2.50)

both for \$3.50

*February, 1917*, by Tarasov-Rodionov (\$3.75)

both for \$2.75

*The Soviet Worker*, by Joseph Freeman (\$1.50)

both for \$2.50

*Georgia Nigger*, by John L. Spivak (\$2.50)

both for \$3.50

*The Mooney Case* (the suppressed Wickersham Report) (\$1.50).

both for \$2.50

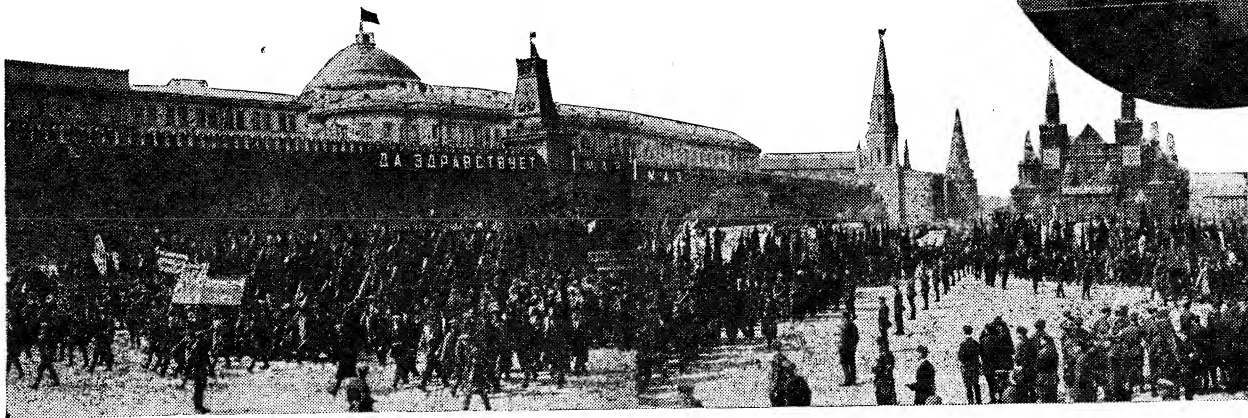
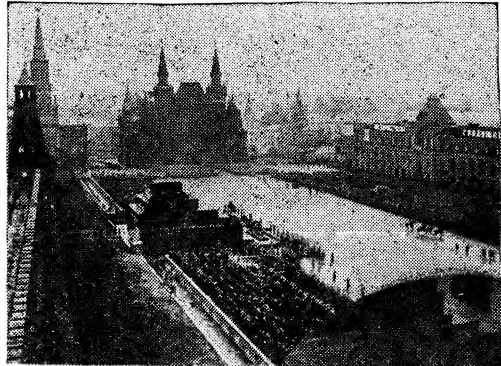
**SUBSCRIBE NOW TO THE NEW MASSES!**

# MANY PEOPLE WANT TO GO TO THE SOVIET UNION— and—MANY CAN GO!

It is easy—just join the great contest for subscriptions to the **New Masses**. The person who gets the most subs wins the first prize—a trip to the Soviet Union, all expenses paid, in time to fully enjoy the thrilling events connected with **MAY DAY** in the historic Red Square.

And besides this—there are 82 prizes.

And besides this on every subscription the contestant keeps 50c! What more could be asked for? You collect the regular sub price of \$1.50. You send us \$1.00 and keep 50c for yourself. And besides this immediate money return, you stand to win one of the 82 prizes, any one of which is worth the time spent in itself. This falls from the laps of the gods! Make extra money, and also win a worthwhile prize!



## IT IS NOT TOO LATE TO JOIN THE CONTEST NOW

Write to us for sub blanks. Join right in. The contest began October 1, and ends March 1, 1933. But don't delay—others may be getting ahead of you right now.

It's easy. See everybody. Pass no one. There are thousands of potential subscribers everywhere. **BEGIN NOW!**

Subscriber's

Name .....

Address .....

1 year ☐; 6 months ☐; 8 months ☐

Collector:

Name & City .....

1 year ..... \$1.50

6 months ... 75c

8 months \$1.00

Subscriber's

Name .....

Address .....

1 year ☐; 6 months ☐; 8 months ☐

Collector:

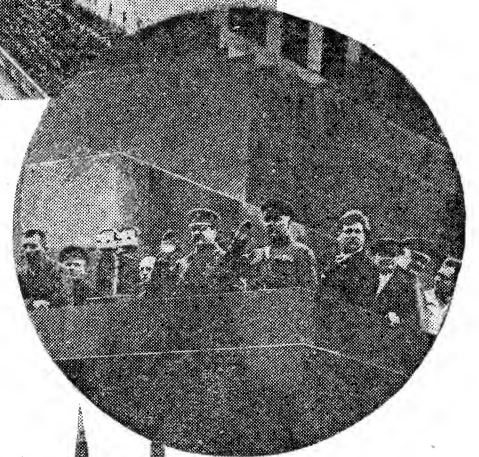
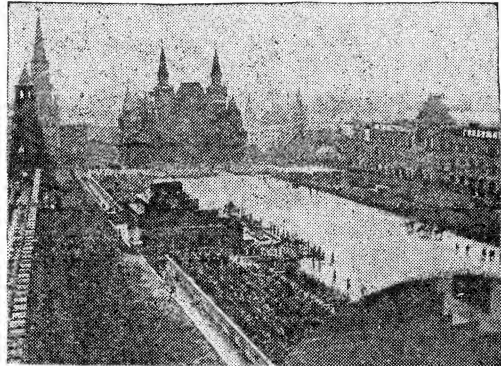
Name & City .....

# MANY PEOPLE WANT TO GO TO THE SOVIET UNION— and—MANY CAN GO!

It is easy—just join the great contest for subscriptions to the **New Masses**. The person who gets the most subs wins the first prize—a trip to the Soviet Union, all expenses paid, in time to fully enjoy the thrilling events connected with MAY DAY in the historic Red Square.

And besides this—there are 82 prizes.

And besides this on every subscription the contestant keeps 50c! What more could be asked for? You collect the regular sub price of \$1.50. You send us \$1.00 and keep 50c for yourself. And besides this immediate money return, you stand to win one of the 82 prizes, any one of which is worth the time spent in itself. This falls from the laps of the gods! Make extra money, and also win a worthwhile prize!



## IT IS NOT TOO LATE TO JOIN THE CONTEST NOW

Write to us for sub blanks. Join right in. The contest began October 1, and ends March 1, 1933. But don't delay—others may be getting ahead of you right now.

It's easy. See everybody. Pass no one. There are thousands of potential subscribers everywhere. **BEGIN NOW!**

Subscriber's  
Name .....

Address .....

1 year ☐; 6 months ☐; 8 months ☐

Collector:  
Name & City .....

1 year ..... \$1.50

6 months ... 75c

8 months \$1.00

Subscriber's  
Name .....

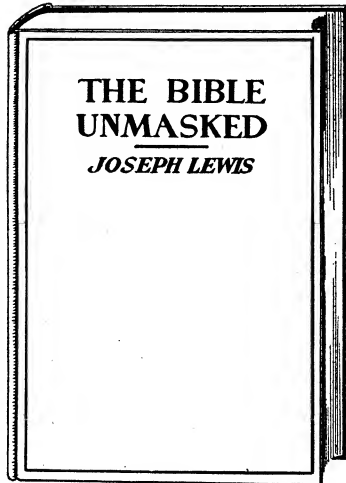
Address .....

1 year ☐; 6 months ☐; 8 months ☐

Collector:  
Name & City .....



# This Amazing Book Now Only \$1.00



Copyright 1932, Freethought Press Assn.

Here is an astounding collection of amazing episodes, strange adventures, anecdotes, and incredible situations taken exactly from the Bible—word for word, without change or alteration. Perhaps you never realized that such stories were to be found in the Scriptures. But here they are; brought together for the first time in this daring book.

## The Bible Unmasked

By Joseph Lewis

Formerly \$2.50 NOW ONLY \$1.00

Reverend A. Wakefield Slaten say: "It will do religionists good to read Mr. Lewis's book."

Here is a remarkable new analysis of the Bible. You have never seen anything like it before. It will amaze you to discover what strange and curious stories are told in the Scriptures. Some of them are so incredible that you will not be satisfied until you have consulted your Bible for proof.

Preachers have denounced "The Bible Unmasked"—but could not explain why such extraordinary incidents are still in the Bible. Ministers have stormed against the author—but they could not change a word of the stories which he disclosed.

And what are these Biblical passages which have caused such a storm of discussions? You will find them, all in "The Bible Unmasked"—revealed for the first time in all their stark reality to the reading public. Read on this page, the Table of Contents which give you only a faint idea of the contents of this unusual book.

No other book in all the world's literature dares to be so blunt as the Bible in its descriptions of licentious episodes. Not even Boccaccio or Rabelais dared to be so brutally frank.

Perhaps you have never realized that tales of seduction and deception were to be found in the Scriptures. It is safe to say that hardly one person in a thousand is familiar with the death-bed scene of King David.

Nothing we can say in this announcement can possibly convey all the amazing information that this startling book contains. You must read the book itself to realize what "forbidden" stories are told in the Bible. You must read it to be convinced of the almost incredible contents of these incidents. So great has been the demand for this astounding collection of Biblical passages that it has already gone through 10 large editions, and has been translated into French, German, and Spanish. Write for your copy now. Take advantage of the special reduction in price. Mail the coupon at once with remittance of only \$1 plus 15c for delivery charges. Let "The Bible Unmasked" bring you these startling revelations taken directly from the pages of the Bible.

### Reward

Joseph Lewis offers a reward of \$1,000 to any person who can prove that the stories contained in "The Bible Unmasked" are not taken *verbatim* from the Authorized Version of the Bible.

**FREETHOUGHT PRESS ASSOCIATION.**

317 East 34th Street, Dept. BU 25, New York, N. Y.

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

The following list of chapters gives you an idea of what startling revelations have been brought together from the Bible in this remarkable book.

Abram and Sarai  
Sporting, or Isaac and His Wife Rebekah  
Incest, or Lot and His Daughters  
Jacob, Leah and Rachel  
The Rape of Dinah  
Joseph and Potiphar's Wife  
Judah and His Daughter-In-Law  
The 19th Chapter of Judges  
King David of Israel and His Wives  
The Rape of Tamar by Her Brother Amnon  
The Story of Ruth  
King Solomon and His Songs  
The Book of Esther  
The New Testament  
The Virgin Birth, or Mary, the Holy Ghost, Joseph and Jesus  
The Virgin Birth According to St. Luke  
Elisabeth, Angel Gabriel and Zacharias, or the Seduction of Elisabeth.  
Jesus and the Sinner  
The Creed of Science

### SPECIAL OFFER COUPON

Freethought Press Ass'n, Dept. BU-25  
317 East 34th St., New York, N. Y.

Gentlemen:

I enclose remittance for \$1.15 for which please send me a copy of "The Bible Unmasked" by Joseph Lewis. I understand that this book formerly cost \$2.50.

Name .....

Address .....

City ..... State.....

[ ] A special combination offer of Mr. Lewis' brochures, "Lincoln the Freethinker," "Franklin the Freethinker," "Jefferson the Freethinker," "The Bible in the Public Schools" and "Atheism" together with copies of Mr. Lewis' radio addresses on "Lincoln the Soldier" and "Gems from Ingersoll," will be sent for only 50c additional. If wanted, put X in square and add 50c to your remittance.

[ ] Check here if you wish book sent C.O.D.